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New York

President:	Mr. Fall	(Guinea)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Chikoti
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mrs. Alvear Valenzuela
	China	Mr. Tang Jiaxuan
	France	Mr. Galouzeau de Villepin
	Germany	Mr. Fischer
	Mexico	Mr. Derbez
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Ivanov
	Spain	Ms. Palacio Vallelersundi
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Al-Shara'
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Straw
	United States of America	Mr. Powell

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Note by the Secretary-General (S/2003/232).

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03-27076 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President (*spoke in French*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of March, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Joschka Fischer, Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, for the leadership he provided in presiding over important deliberations of the Council during the preceding month.

I should also like to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council to His Excellency Mr. Gunter Pleuger, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of February 2003. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Pleuger for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Note by the Secretary-General (S/2003/232)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Iraq, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Blix to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. ElBaradei to take a seat at the Council table.

I welcome the presence at this meeting of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2003/232, which contains a note by the Secretary-General, transmitting the twelfth quarterly report of the Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

I should also like to call the attention of members of the Council to a letter dated 3 March 2003 from Malaysia addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/2003/246.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

I give the floor to Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

Mr. Blix: For nearly three years, I have been coming to the Security Council to present the quarterly reports of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). They have described our many preparations for the resumption of inspections in Iraq. The twelfth quarterly report (S/2003/232, annex) is the first that describes three

months of inspections. They come after four years without inspections. The report was finalized 10 days ago, and a number of relevant events have taken place since then. Today's statement will supplement the circulated report on these points in order to bring the Council up to date.

Inspections in Iraq resumed on 27 November 2002. In matters relating to process, notably prompt access to sites, we have faced relatively few difficulties — and certainly far fewer than those that were faced by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) in the period 1991 to 1998. This may well be due to the strong outside pressure.

Some practical matters which were not settled by the talks that Mr. ElBaradei and I had with the Iraqi side in Vienna prior to inspections or in resolution 1441 (2002) have been resolved at meetings which we have had in Baghdad. Initial difficulties raised by the Iraqi side about helicopters and aerial surveillance planes operating in the no-fly zones have been overcome. That is not to say that the operation of inspections is free from friction but at this juncture we are able to perform professional no-notice inspections all over Iraq and to increase aerial surveillance.

American U-2 and French Mirage surveillance aircraft already give us valuable imagery, supplementing satellite pictures, and we expect soon to be able to add night vision capability through an aircraft offered to us by the Russian Federation. We also expect to add low-level, close-area surveillance through drones provided by Germany. We are grateful not only to the countries which place these valuable tools at our disposal, but also to the States, most recently Cyprus, which have agreed to the stationing of aircraft on their territory.

Iraq, with a highly developed administrative system, should be able to provide more documentary evidence about its proscribed weapons programmes. Only a few new documents of this type have come to light so far and been handed over since we began inspections. It was a disappointment that Iraq's declaration of 7 December 2002 did not bring new documentary evidence. I hope that efforts in this respect, including the appointment of a governmental commission, will give significant results. When proscribed items are deemed unaccounted for, it is, above all, credible accounts that are needed — or the proscribed items, if they exist.

Where authentic documents do not become available, interviews with persons who may have relevant knowledge and experience may be another way of obtaining evidence. UNMOVIC has names of such persons in its records, and they are among the people whom we seek to interview. In the past month, Iraq has provided us with the names of many persons who may be relevant sources of information, in particular persons who took part in various phases of the unilateral destruction of biological and chemical weapons and proscribed missiles in 1991.

This provision of names prompts two reflections. The first is that, with such detailed information existing regarding those who took part in the unilateral destruction, surely there must also remain records regarding the quantities and other data concerning the various items destroyed.

The second reflection is that, with relevant witnesses available, it becomes even more important to be able to conduct interviews in modes and locations which allow us to be confident that the testimony provided is given without outside influence. While the Iraqi side seems to have encouraged interviewees not to request the presence of Iraqi officials — so-called minders — or the taping of the interviews, conditions ensuring the absence of undue influences are difficult to attain inside Iraq. Interviews outside the country might provide such assurance. It is our intention to request such interviews shortly. Nevertheless, despite remaining shortcomings, interviews are useful. Since we started requesting interviews, 38 individuals have been asked for private interviews, of which 10 have accepted under our terms — seven of them during the past week.

As I noted on 14 February, intelligence authorities have claimed that weapons of mass destruction are moved around Iraq by trucks and, in particular, that there are mobile production units for biological weapons. The Iraqi side states that such activities do not exist. Several inspections have taken place at declared and undeclared sites in relation to mobile production facilities. Food-testing mobile laboratories and mobile workshops have been seen, as well as large containers with seed-processing equipment. No evidence of proscribed activities has so far been found. Iraq is expected to assist in the development of credible ways to conduct random checks of ground transportation.

Inspectors are also engaged in examining Iraq's programme for remotely piloted vehicles. A number of sites have been inspected, with data being collected to assess the range and other capabilities of the various models found. Inspections are continuing in that area.

There have been reports, denied from the Iraqi side, that proscribed activities are conducted underground. Iraq should provide information on any underground structure suitable for the production or storage of weapons of mass destruction. During inspections of declared or undeclared facilities, inspection teams have examined building structures for any possible underground facilities. In addition, ground-penetrating radar equipment was used in several specific locations. No underground facilities for chemical or biological production or storage have been found so far.

I should add that, both for the monitoring of ground transportation and for the inspection of underground facilities, we would need to increase our staff in Iraq. I am not talking about a doubling of staff. I would rather have twice the amount of high-quality information about sites to inspect than twice as many expert inspectors to send.

On 14 February I reported to the Council that the Iraqi side had become more active in taking and proposing steps which potentially might shed new light on unresolved disarmament issues. Even a week ago, when the current quarterly report was finalized, there was still relatively little tangible progress to note; hence the cautious formulations in the report before the Council.

As of today, there is more. While the Iraqi side tried to persuade us during our meetings in Baghdad that the Al Samoud 2 missiles that they have declared fall within the permissible range set by the Security Council, the calculations of an international panel of experts led us to the opposite conclusion. Iraq has since accepted that these missiles and associated items must be destroyed and has started the process of destruction under our supervision. The destruction undertaken constitutes a substantial measure of disarmament — indeed, the first since the middle of the 1990s. We are not watching the breaking of toothpicks. Lethal weapons are being destroyed. However, I must add that the report I have today tells me that no destruction work has continued today. I hope that this is a temporary break.

Until today, 34 Al Samoud 2 missiles — including four training missiles, two combat warheads, one launcher and five engines — have been destroyed under UNMOVIC supervision. Work is continuing to identify and inventory the parts and equipment associated with the Al Samoud 2 programme. Two "reconstituted" casting chambers used in the production of solid propellant missiles have been destroyed and the remnants melted or encased in concrete. The legality of the Al Fatah missile is still under review, pending further investigation and measurement of various parameters of that missile. More papers on anthrax, VX and missiles have recently been provided. Many have been found to restate what Iraq has already declared, and some will require further study and discussion.

There is a significant Iraqi effort under way to clarify a major source of uncertainty as to the quantities of biological and chemical weapons that were unilaterally destroyed in 1991. A part of this effort concerns a disposal site that was deemed too dangerous for full investigation in the past. It is now being re-excavated. To date, Iraq has unearthed eight complete bombs, comprising two liquid-filled intact R-400 bombs and six other complete bombs. Bomb fragments have also been found. Samples have been taken. The investigation of the destruction site could, in the best case, allow a determination of the number of bombs destroyed at that site. It should be followed by a serious and credible effort to determine the separate issue of how many R-400-type bombs were produced. In this, as in other matters, inspection work is moving forward and may yield results.

Iraq proposed an investigation using advanced technology to quantify the amount of unilaterally destroyed anthrax dumped at a site. However, even if the use of advanced technology could quantify the amount of anthrax said to be dumped at the site, the results would still be open to interpretation. Defining the quantity of anthrax destroyed must, of course, be followed by efforts to establish what quantity was actually produced.

With respect to VX, Iraq has recently suggested a similar method to quantify a VX precursor stated to have been unilaterally destroyed in the summer of 1991.

Iraq has also recently informed us that, following the adoption of the presidential decree prohibiting

private individuals and mixed companies from engaging in work related to weapons of mass destruction, further legislation on the subject is to be enacted. That appears to be in response to a letter from UNMOVIC requesting clarification of the issue.

What are we to make of these activities? One can hardly avoid the impression that, after a period of somewhat reluctant cooperation, there has been an acceleration of initiatives from the Iraqi side since the end of January. This is welcome, but the value of these measures must be soberly judged in the light of how many question marks they actually succeed in straightening out. This is not yet clear.

Against this background, the question is now asked whether Iraq has cooperated "immediately, unconditionally, and actively" with UNMOVIC, as required under operative paragraph 9 of resolution 1441 (2002). The answers can be seen from the factual descriptions that I have provided. However, if more direct answers are desired, I would say the following. The Iraqi side has tried on occasion to attach conditions, as it did regarding helicopters and U-2 planes. Iraq has not, however, so far persisted in attaching these or other conditions for the exercise of any of our inspection rights. If it did, we would report it.

It is obvious that, while the numerous initiatives that are now being taken by the Iraqi side with a view to resolving some longstanding open disarmament issues can be seen as active or even proactive, these initiatives, three to four months into the new resolution, cannot be said to constitute immediate cooperation, nor do they necessarily cover all areas of relevance. They are nevertheless welcome, and UNMOVIC is responding to them in the hope of solving presently unresolved disarmament issues.

Members of the Council may relate most of what I have said to resolution 1441 (2002), but UNMOVIC is performing work under several resolutions of the Security Council. The quarterly report before members is submitted in accordance with resolution 1284 (1999), which not only created UNMOVIC, but also continues to guide much of our work. Under the timelines set by that resolution, the results of some of this work is to be reported to the Council before the end of this month. Let me be more specific.

Resolution 1284 (1999) instructs UNMOVIC to "address unresolved disarmament issues" and to identify "key remaining disarmament tasks", and the latter are to be submitted for approval by the Council in the context of a work programme. UNMOVIC will be ready to submit a draft work programme this month, as required.

UNMOVIC, UNSCOM and the Amorim panel did valuable work to identify the disarmament issues that were still open at the end of 1998. UNMOVIC has used this material as starting points but has analysed the data behind it and data and documents since 1998 to compile its own list of unresolved disarmament issues, or, rather, clustered issues. It is the answers to these issues that we seek through our inspection activities. It is also from the list of these clustered issues that UNMOVIC will identify key remaining disarmament tasks. As noted in the report before members, this list of clustered issues is ready.

UNMOVIC is required to submit only the work programme with the key remaining disarmament tasks to the Council. As I understand, several Council members are interested in the working document with the complete clusters of disarmament issues, and we have declassified it and are ready to make it available to members of the Council on request. In this working document — which may still be adjusted in the light of new information — members will get a more up-to-date review of the outstanding issues than in the documents of 1999, to which members usually refer. Each cluster in the working document ends with a number of points indicating what Iraq could do to solve the issue. Hence, Iraq's cooperation could be measured against the successful resolution of issues.

I should note that the working document contains much information and discussion about the issues that existed at the end of 1998, including information that came to light after 1998. It contains much less information and discussion about the period after 1998, primarily because of a paucity of information. Nevertheless, intelligence agencies have expressed the view that proscribed programmes have continued or restarted in this period. It is further contended that proscribed programmes and items are located in underground facilities, as I mentioned, and that proscribed items are being moved around Iraq. The working document does contain suggestions on how these concerns may be tackled.

Let me conclude by telling members that UNMOVIC is currently drafting the work programme

that resolution 1284 (1999) requires us to submit this month. It will obviously contain our proposed list of key remaining disarmament tasks; it will describe the reinforced system of ongoing monitoring and verification that the Council has asked us to implement; it will also describe the various subsystems that constitute the programme — for instance, for aerial surveillance, for information from Governments and suppliers, for sampling and for the checking of road traffic.

How much time would it take to resolve the key remaining disarmament tasks? While cooperation can, and is, to be immediate, disarmament and, at any rate, the verification of it, cannot be instant. Even with a proactive Iraqi attitude induced by continued outside pressure, it would still take some time to verify sites and items, analyse documents, interview relevant persons and draw conclusions. It would not take years, nor weeks, but months. Neither Governments nor inspectors would want disarmament inspection to go on forever. However, it must be remembered that, in accordance with the governing resolutions, a sustained inspection and monitoring system is to remain in place after verified disarmament, to give confidence and to sound an alarm if signs were seen of the revival of any proscribed weapons programmes.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Blix for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. ElBaradei: My report to the Council today is an update on the status of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) nuclear verification activities in Iraq pursuant to Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) and other relevant resolutions.

When I last reported to the Council, on 14 February, I explained that the Agency's inspection activities had moved well beyond the reconnaissance phase — that is, re-establishing our knowledge base regarding Iraq's nuclear capabilities — and into the investigative phase, which focuses on the central question before the IAEA relevant to disarmament: whether Iraq has revived, or attempted to revive, its defunct nuclear weapons programme over the last four years.

At the outset, let me state one general observation, namely, that during the past four years, at the majority of Iraqi sites, industrial capacity has deteriorated substantially due to the departure of the foreign support that was often present in the late 1980s, the departure of large numbers of skilled Iraqi personnel in the past decade and the lack of consistent maintenance by Iraq of sophisticated equipment. At only a few inspected sites involved in industrial research, development and manufacturing have the facilities been improved and new personnel taken on. This overall deterioration in industrial capacity is of course of direct relevance to Iraq's capability for resuming a nuclear weapons programme.

The IAEA has now conducted a total of 218 nuclear inspections at 141 sites, including 21 that had not been inspected before. In addition, IAEA experts have taken part in many joint inspections of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the IAEA.

Technical support for nuclear inspections has continued to expand. The three operational air samplers have collected weekly air particulate samples from key locations in Iraq that are being sent to laboratories for analysis. Additional results of water, sediment, vegetation and material sample analyses have been received from the relevant laboratories.

Our vehicle-borne radiation survey team has covered some 2,000 kilometres over the past three weeks. Survey access has been gained to over 75 facilities, including military garrisons and camps, weapons factories, truck parks, manufacturing facilities and residential areas.

Interviews have continued with relevant Iraqi personnel, at times with individuals and groups in the workplace during the course of unannounced inspections, and on other occasions in pre-arranged meetings with key scientists and other specialists known to have been involved with Iraq's past nuclear programme. The IAEA has continued to conduct interviews, even when conditions were not in accordance with the IAEA's preferred modalities, with a view to gaining as much information as possible — information that could be cross-checked for validity with other sources and which could be helpful in our assessment of areas under investigation.

As the Council may recall, when we first began to request private unescorted interviews, the Iraqi

interviewees insisted on taping the interviews and on keeping the recorded tapes. Recently, upon our insistence, individuals have been consenting to being interviewed without escorts and without taped records. The IAEA has conducted two such private interviews in the last 10 days, and hopes that its ability to conduct private interviews will continue unhindered, including possibly interviews outside Iraq.

I should add that we are looking into further refining the modalities for conducting interviews to ensure that they are conducted freely and to alleviate concerns that interviews are being listened to by other Iraqi parties. In our view, interviews outside Iraq may be the best way to ensure that interviews are free. We therefore intend to request such interviews shortly. We are also asking other States to enable us to conduct interviews with former Iraqi scientists that now reside in those States.

In the last few weeks Iraq has provided a considerable volume of documentation relevant to the issues I reported earlier as being of particular concern, including Iraq's efforts to procure aluminium tubes, its attempted procurement of magnets and magnet-production capabilities and its reported attempt to import uranium. I will touch briefly upon the progress made on each of those issues.

Since my last update to the Council, the primary technical focus of IAEA field activities in Iraq has been on resolving several outstanding issues related to the possible resumption of efforts by Iraq to enrich uranium through the use of centrifuges. For that purpose, the IAEA assembled a specially qualified team of international centrifuge-manufacturing experts.

With regard to aluminium tubes, the IAEA has conducted a thorough investigation of Iraq's attempts to purchase large quantities of high-strength aluminium tubes. As previously reported, Iraq has maintained that those aluminium tubes were sought for rocket production. Extensive field investigation and document analysis have failed to uncover any evidence that Iraq intended to use those 81mm tubes for any project other than the reverse-engineering of rockets.

The Iraqi decision-making process with regard to the design of those rockets was well documented. Iraq has provided copies of design documents, procurement records, minutes of committee meetings and supporting data and samples. A thorough analysis of that information, together with information gathered from interviews with Iraqi personnel, has allowed the IAEA to develop a coherent picture of attempted purchases and intended usage of the 81mm aluminium tubes, as well as the rationale behind the changes in the tolerances.

Drawing on that information, the IAEA has learned that the original tolerances for the 81mm tubes were set prior to 1987, and were based on physical measurements taken from a small number of imported rockets in Iraq's possession. Initial attempts to reverse-engineer the rockets met with little success. Tolerances were adjusted during the following years as part of ongoing efforts to revitalize the project and improve operational efficiency. The project languished for long periods during that time and became the subject of several committees, which resulted in specification and tolerance changes on each occasion.

Based on available evidence, the IAEA team has concluded that Iraq's efforts to import those aluminium tubes were not likely to have been related to the manufacture of centrifuges and, moreover, that it was highly unlikely that Iraq could have achieved the considerable re-design needed to use them in a revived centrifuge programme. However, this issue will continue to be scrutinized and investigated.

With respect to reports about Iraq's efforts to import high-strength permanent magnets — or to achieve the capability for producing such magnets — for use in a centrifuge enrichment programme, I should note that, since 1998, Iraq has purchased high-strength magnets for various uses. Iraq has declared inventories of magnets of 12 different designs. The IAEA has verified that previously acquired magnets have been used for missile guidance systems, industrial machinery, electricity meters and field telephones. Through visits to research and production sites, reviews of engineering drawings and analyses of sample magnets, IAEA experts familiar with the use of such magnets in centrifuge enrichment have verified that none of the magnets that Iraq has declared could be used directly for centrifuge magnetic bearings.

In June 2001, Iraq signed a contract for a new magnet production line, for delivery and installation in 2003. The delivery has not yet occurred, and Iraqi documentation and interviews of Iraqi personnel indicate that this contract will not be executed. However, they have concluded that the replacement of foreign procurement with domestic magnet production

seems reasonable from an economic point of view. In addition, the training and experience acquired by Iraq in the pre-1991 period makes it likely that Iraq possesses the expertise to manufacture high-strength permanent magnets suitable for use in enrichment centrifuges. The IAEA will therefore continue to monitor and inspect equipment and materials that could be used to make magnets for enrichment centrifuges.

With regard to uranium acquisition, the IAEA has made progress in its investigation into reports that Iraq sought to buy uranium from the Niger in recent years. The investigation was centred on documents provided by a number of States that pointed to an agreement between the Niger and Iraq for the sale of uranium between 1999 and 2001.

The IAEA has discussed these reports with the Governments of Iraq and of the Niger, both of which have denied that any such activity took place. For its part, Iraq has provided the IAEA with a comprehensive explanation of its relations with the Niger, and has described a visit by an Iraqi official to a number of African countries, including the Niger, in February 1999, which Iraq thought might have given rise to the reports. The IAEA was able to review correspondence coming from various bodies of the Government of the Niger, and to compare the form, format, contents and signatures of that correspondence with those of the alleged procurement-related documentation.

Based on a thorough analysis, the IAEA has concluded, with the concurrence of outside experts, that these documents — which formed the basis for the reports of recent uranium transactions between Iraq and the Niger — are, in fact, not authentic. We have therefore concluded that these specific allegations are unfounded. However, we will continue to follow up any additional evidence, if it emerges, relevant to efforts by Iraq illicitly to import nuclear materials.

Many concerns regarding Iraq's possible intention to resume its nuclear programme have arisen from Iraqi procurement efforts reported by a number of States. In addition, many of Iraq's efforts to procure commodities and products, including magnets and aluminium tubes, have been conducted in contravention of the sanctions controls specified under Security Council resolution 661 (1990) and other relevant resolutions.

The issue of procurement efforts remains under thorough investigation, and further verification will be forthcoming. In fact, an IAEA team of technical experts is currently in Iraq. It is composed of customs investigators and computer forensic specialists, and it is conducting a series of investigations, through inspections at trading companies and commercial organizations, aimed at understanding Iraq's patterns of procurement.

In conclusion, I am able to report today that, in the area of nuclear weapons — the most lethal weapons of mass destruction — inspections in Iraq are moving forward. Since the resumption of inspections a little over three months ago — and particularly during the three weeks since my last oral report to the Council — the IAEA has made important progress in identifying what nuclear-related capabilities remain in Iraq, and in its assessment of whether Iraq has made any efforts to revive its past nuclear programme during the intervening four years since inspections were brought to a halt. At this stage, the following can be stated.

First, there is no indication of resumed nuclear activities in those buildings that were identified through the use of satellite imagery as having been reconstructed or newly erected since 1998, nor any indication of nuclear-related prohibited activities at any inspected sites.

Secondly, there is no indication that Iraq has attempted to import uranium since 1990.

Thirdly, there is no indication that Iraq has attempted to import aluminium tubes for use in centrifuge enrichment. Moreover, even if Iraq had pursued such a plan, it would have encountered practical difficulties in manufacturing centrifuges out of the aluminium tubes in question.

Fourthly, although we are still reviewing issues related to magnets and magnet production, there is no indication to date that Iraq imported magnets for use in a centrifuge enrichment programme.

As I stated earlier, the IAEA will naturally continue further to scrutinize and investigate all of these issues.

After three months of intrusive inspections, we have to date found no evidence or plausible indication of the revival of a nuclear-weapon programme in Iraq. We intend to continue our inspection activities, making use of all the additional rights granted to us by resolution 1441 (2002) and all additional tools that might be available to us, including reconnaissance platforms and all relevant technologies. We also hope

to continue to receive from States actionable information relevant to our mandate.

I should note that, in the past three weeks, possibly as a result of ever-increasing pressure by the international community, Iraq has been forthcoming in its cooperation, particularly with regard to the conduct of private interviews and in making available evidence that could contribute to the resolution of matters of IAEA concern. I hope that Iraq will continue to expand the scope and accelerate the pace of its cooperation.

The detailed knowledge of Iraq's capabilities that IAEA experts have accumulated since 1991, combined with the extended rights provided by resolution 1441 (2002), the active commitment by all States to help us fulfil our mandate, and the recently increased level of Iraqi cooperation — should enable us in the near future to provide the Security Council with an objective and thorough assessment of Iraq's nuclear-related capabilities. However credible this assessment may be, we will endeavour — in view of the inherent uncertainties associated with any verification process, and particularly in the light of Iraq's past record of cooperation — to evaluate Iraq's capabilities on a continuous basis as part of our long-term monitoring and verification programme, in order to provide the international community with ongoing and real-time assurances.

The President (*spoke in French*): Before giving the floor to Council members, I wish to recall the understanding we have reached, namely that all participants will limit their statements to no more than seven minutes, in order to enable the Council to work efficiently within its timetable.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. Joschka Fischer, Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Mr. Fischer (Germany): I would like to congratulate His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Guinea on his assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and I thank him for the kind words addressed to me and to the German presidency of last month.

I would also like to thank Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei for their briefings on the quarterly report. Both can count on Germany's full support.

The aim of the international community remains the complete disarmament — and only the disarmament — of Iraq to finally eliminate the international threat posed by Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. That is what all the relevant Security Council resolutions state.

What is at stake now is the unity of the international community. We have taken a forceful stance in our common fight against international terrorism. We fight together against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We stand united in our condemnation of the Iraqi regime. Where we have different views is on our strategy of how to achieve the effective and total disarmament of Iraq. The Security Council must not spare any effort to find a joint approach to attain our common goal.

The briefings by Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei have made clear once more that Iraq's cooperation with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) does not yet fully meet United Nations demands. Baghdad could have taken many of its recent steps earlier and more willingly. In recent days, cooperation has, nevertheless, notably improved. That is a positive development, which makes it all the less comprehensible why that development should now be abandoned.

There is real progress to be noted on the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions in all fields. In the sphere of missile technology, there has been clear progress. Thus, Iraq informed the inspectors of its Al Samoud missiles. After examination by UNMOVIC, it was established that their range was too long. After Mr. Blix had set for the regime in Baghdad a deadline for their destruction, Iraq began to destroy the missiles within the prescribed time frame. That is important progress. It shows that peaceful disarmament is possible and that there is a real alternative to war. That positive development also shows that Hans Blix's approach of giving the regime in Baghdad concrete time frames is successful. This method also ought to be used for other unresolved problems.

As far as Iraq's nuclear potential is concerned, we can note great progress. Mr. ElBaradei has just confirmed that. The accounts presented by Iraq are plausible and verifiable. Cooperation on inspections is good. The IAEA is confident about reaching final conclusions soon.

Turning to biological weapons, there has also been progress in individual spheres; for example, in the excavation of many R-400 aerial bombs which are now being assessed by UNMOVIC. Baghdad has announced the presentation of a comprehensive report on open questions in the field of biological and chemical weapons. The interviews with Iraqi scientists are now taking place without monitoring or recording. Preparations are being made to conduct interviews abroad.

France, Russia and Germany presented a memorandum to the Security Council on 24 February proposing a tough regime of intensive inspections (S/2003/214, annex). On the basis of those proposals, the inspections should be stepped up and accelerated. For that to happen, each remaining problem has to be specified and priorities have to be set. A time frame should thereby be prescribed for every single problem.

Therefore, Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei should present us with a detailed, comprehensive working programme that clarifies how they and their teams intend to tackle the complete disarmament of Iraq, as called for by the United Nations. It is very important that that working programme be presented to the Security Council without delay. We would like to hear today a statement by the inspectors on the remaining key disarmament issues in the cluster report that has been drawn up.

The inspections cannot go on forever. The aim of disarming Iraq has to be pursued energetically and systematically. The Iraqi Government has to fully cooperate with the inspectors. But given the current situation and the ongoing progress, we see no need for a second resolution. Why should we leave the path that we have embarked on now that the inspections, on the basis of resolution 1441 (2002), are showing viable results?

The Security Council is now meeting for the third time within a month at ministerial level to discuss the Iraq crisis. This shows the urgency we attach to the disarmament of Iraq and to the threat of war. The crisis in Iraq troubles our Governments. It troubles the people in our countries. It troubles the entire region of the Near and Middle East. Precisely because the situation is so dramatic, we have to keep firmly reminding ourselves what a war would mean, what the endless suffering it would bring to countless innocent people and what catastrophic humanitarian consequences it would entail. Are we really in a situation that absolutely necessitates the *ultima ratio*, the very last resort? I think not, because peaceful means are far from having been exhausted.

The Security Council faces — in fact, we all face — an important decision, probably a historic turning point. The alternatives are clear: the disarmament of Iraq by war or its disarmament by exhausting all peaceful means. The risks of a military option are evident to us all. There is good reason to believe that the region would not become more stable, but rather more unstable, through a war, and, what is more, that in the long term international terrorism would be strengthened, not weakened, and that our joint efforts to resolve the Middle East conflict would be hindered.

Then there is the alternative. If we succeed in implementing the effective and complete disarmament of Iraq with peaceful means, we will improve the framework conditions for a regional process of stability, security and cooperation, based on the renunciation of the use of force, on arms control and on a cooperative system of confidence-building measures.

Resolutions 1441 (2002) and 1284 (1999) point a clear way forward for the Security Council. They have to remain the basis of our action. The progress of the last few days has shown that we have efficient alternatives to war in Iraq. By taking this path, we will strengthen the relevance of the United Nations and the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany for his kind words addressed to me.

I call now on His Excellency Mr. Farouk Al-Shara', Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Al-Shara' (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I also welcome the presence in the Chamber of the members of an Arab committee established at the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit of the League of Arab States held six days ago. The committee membership includes the Kingdom of Bahrain in its capacity as current Chairman of the Arab Summit, the Republic of Lebanon as former Chairman of the Arab Summit and the Republic of Tunisia as the

next Chairman of the Arab Summit, as agreed at the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit. The committee also includes Syria, Egypt and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States. During its short visit to New York, this Arab committee will be able to meet with some members of the Security Council.

The Security Council met in this Chamber three weeks ago to discuss the question of Iraq. That was only a short while ago, yet the rapid and important developments that have taken place since then in the Middle East should be recalled briefly if only because of their grave impact not only on the region, but perhaps on the future of international relations.

The day after our meeting here on 14 February, millions of people in more than 2,000 cities around the world took to the streets to say no to war against Iraq. This phenomenon was unprecedented in history.

On the day that followed those demonstrations, the Arab ministers for foreign affairs held an emergency meeting in Cairo. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece attended that meeting in his capacity as holder of the current presidency of the European Union, as did representatives of the European Commission. All the participants expressed their opposition to war and stressed the need for a peaceful solution to the Iraqi crisis in implementation of resolution 1441 (2002).

France, Russia, China and Germany have repeatedly and most clearly stressed that there is an alternative to war. Those countries are confident that the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction can be achieved by peaceful means if inspections are enhanced and the inspectors are allowed freely to pursue their tasks.

On 25 February, the Non-Aligned Movement held its summit in Kuala Lumpur, which was attended by representatives of 116 States. In its final declaration, the summit called for a peaceful settlement to the Iraqi crisis and stressed the need to allow the inspectors more time to finish their work. The participants stressed the importance of the role of the United Nations and international legitimacy, along with the need to avoid double standards.

On 1 March, the regular Arab summit was held in Sharm el-Sheikh. In serving as an emergency session, the summit adopted its first decision expressing its categorical opposition to a strike against Iraq. The summit stressed the need to give the inspectors sufficient time to fulfil their mandate and underlined the Security Council's responsibility in protecting the Iraqi people and in preserving Iraq's independence, unity and territorial integrity. The Arab leaders expressed their solidarity with the Iraqi people, called for a lifting of the sanctions and established the follow-up committee to which I referred earlier and which included Bahrain, Lebanon, Tunisia, Syria, Egypt and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States. The committee is entrusted with transmitting the Arab point of view to the five permanent members of the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as to Baghdad should the situation warrant. The Arab summit was immediately followed by an Islamic summit in Doha at which Islamic countries confirmed the decision and themes of the Arab summit.

In this context, we Arabs and Muslims should recall with appreciation the appeals that have been made for months now by the leaders of churches throughout the world that peace should be pursued and war averted. These appeals were crowned by the message that the emissary of the Holy See conveyed two days ago to the President of the United States, in which he clearly conveyed the opinion that war against Iraq is illegitimate and unjust.

As for Iraq, Mr. Blix informed us earlier today that it has cooperated actively. As Mr. ElBaradei explained, this cooperation has also been positive, procedural and substantive. The destruction of missiles that is currently under way in Iraq is tangible and material evidence of that cooperation, which can neither be considered deceptive nor dismissed as insignificant. It is being extended at the very moment when inspectors are achieving tangible progress in implementing resolution 1441 (2002). We believe that it is the right of any State or individual to ask: Why insist on adopting a new resolution allowing the use of military force, as if war were the best and not the worst option?

In the light of all this, one cannot also but wonder what logic can explain the cooperation of the United States with Israel in developing sophisticated missiles that cost American taxpayers billions of dollars, while the United States denies such an opportunity — even more modest missiles with shorter range and less capability — to the Arab countries that need them to defend themselves. What logic allows Israel to possess

all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, although it continues to occupy the territories of its neighbours and to threaten them, in contravention of all norms of international law? President Bashar Al-Assad has asked: "They fear for our safety from Iraq, but not Israel?" Given that resolution 1441 (2002) does not set a time limit for the inspectors' work, what is the basis of arguments that time has run out and that Iraq has only days left to comply or else?

It is truly ironic and somewhat naïve to claim that war against Iraq will uncover its undeclared weapons of mass destruction, despite the fact that the inspectors, with all the unprecedented facilities provided to them, cannot find these weapons. Contrary to the wisdom which holds that backing away from an improper position is a virtue, some believe that the huge build-up of forces is by itself sufficient to justify war against Iraq and to destroy it, merely because no one with any sense of realism can accept that these forces should return to their barracks empty-handed. If that is the case, are we witnessing action in a just cause or merely armed robbery?

Regardless of the accuracy of arguments advanced internationally on the possible objectives of the American military campaign — be they to control the oil fields or to change the map of the Middle East — the Arabs in particular and the international community in general are very apprehensive. We are gravely concerned over the possibility of heinous massacres of the Palestinian people, the demolition of their homes and their forced transfer when war against Iraq is in full swing. Our apprehensions are well founded, given developments in the occupied territories since 11 September 2001, and the Security Council must take them into account as we approach the moment of truth, which we hope will never arrive.

We are confident that the United Nations, which represents the will of the international community, will opt for peace. We are confident that this option will prevail over the use of force. The United Nations and its Charter shall remain the main instruments of humankind for the achievement of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic for the kind words he addressed to me.

I now call on His Excellency Luis Ernesto Derbez, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

Mr. Derbez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to extend Mexico's best wishes to the delegation of Guinea upon assuming the presidency of the Security Council and to thank Mr. Fischer and the delegation of Germany for their successful leadership of our work during the previous month.

Mexico attends with optimism this meeting in which the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of a large number of members of the Security Council are meeting once again to listen to the inspectors of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to have a dialogue among us. Despite the apparent divergence of positions among member States with respect to the best way to proceed in achieving the definitive disarmament of Iraq, multilateral diplomacy is still in force. We are still seated at this table in the attempt to find a common course of action.

The Security Council is undoubtedly the ideal forum in which to explore all the options and to agree on which option is the most appropriate for the international community. The search for a consensus that expresses the collective will of States is what brings us together and what we hope to achieve. Mexico hopes that the differences that today prevent us from reaching agreement on acting together on the question of Iraq will be discussed and resolved right here, in this the home *par excellence* of the community of nations. We believe that in advancing towards agreement we shall be able to revitalize the credibility, reliability and the authority of the Security Council and the validity and the spirit of the Charter of San Francisco, and allow us to give greater strength to the United Nations. Let us not waste this opportunity.

We have taken note of the situation of the inspections of UNMOVIC and IAEA in Iraq. Once again, we express our full appreciation for the efforts made by the inspectors both on the ground and in the presentation of their reports to the Security Council.

Mexico wants to express its concern with respect to the situation in Iraq and with respect to the lack of active, immediate and effective cooperation by the regime that governs that country. There has been a clear consensus among us all on the objective to be achieved. However, the latest developments and

declarations on the question of Iraq make it clear that there are different visions on carrying out the tasks of disarmament in that country. We are greatly distressed by the fact that various relationships and common values, constructed with much effort over several decades, are now being eroded.

We face very complex decisions affecting the future of the world. That is why we are worried by the distance between positions among the members of the Council, which leads to recriminations and disagreements that until a few months ago we believed had been overcome. If that polarization increases, it may in future gravely affect the way in which we approach a question as important as that of disarmament. This is a defining moment. For that reason, Mexico wishes to stress the importance of not becoming discouraged in seeking the broadest possible consensus among the members of the Security Council. The strength of the collective security system of the United Nations is founded on the Council's unity.

The Charter of the United is the instrument that must give form and legitimacy to all our understandings and to all our collective actions. Mexico shares with the rest of the members of the Council the conviction that it is both necessary and possible to reconcile the differences. In the last few days, with our colleagues, Mexico has actively explored different manners of reaching agreement. With other colleagues, we have approached the Council members most directly involved in the question of Iraq in order to facilitate an understanding and to avoid taking up inflexible positions. International public opinion demands us to act in a united and prudent manner.

Although it is not necessary to have uniformity within international organisms, as is fitting in a plural and diverse world, it should at least be necessary to promote to the greatest extent possible agreement on the way to deal with the most worrisome issues in the world in order to ensure effective and lasting international security.

Mexico is alarmed by the damage that the issue of Iraq has caused in the international political arena, by the uncertainty that it creates in financial markets and by how the issue is affecting the framework of stability for productive investment, which is the basis for economic growth and the development of peoples. Peace among nations is intimately linked to that development.

Throughout the history of its foreign policy, Mexico has always made the greatest effort to propose initiatives that strengthen multilateral forums and mutual understanding among peoples in observance of international law. That is the most effective way to ensure that we resolve conflicts in an effective and lasting manner.

Mexico wishes to broaden the range of formulas for achieving an effective disarmament of Iraq and to open this space to more options and ideas that will preserve the diplomatic option in dealing with an issue such as disarmament. Using means that preserve and revitalize the values of peace, Mexico advocates the adoption of more effective means of pressure in order to enforce the cooperation that we all demand of Iraq. That active cooperation is essential for determining with absolute certainty the location of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and, if they exist, for ensuring their destruction.

It is regrettable that Iraq reacts so quickly to political pressure and the real threat of the use of force, but does not react in such a manner to the reiterated demands of the international community. It is even more regrettable that this cooperation is still limited and is conceded in small amounts. From what we have heard, Iraqi cooperation has been unwilling in respect to the demands of the international community. That is why Mexico considers that the international community can be even firmer, through peaceful means. Mexico reiterates its request that the Iraqi Government radically change its attitude and carry out immediately clear and unequivocal actions to demonstrate that it has chosen the path of disarmament and, consequently, the peaceful resolution of this crisis.

Our foreign policy is the result of principles and convictions acquired over a long and rich historical experience. We have very true and valid reasons to defend multilateralism, to work so that the decisions adopted to disarm Iraq are not unilateral but unequivocally fall within international law. Our collective interests lie in the maintenance of peace. That is how we understand our responsibility as members of the Security Council of the United Nations. Mexico is convinced that we have to explore all options and take advantage of all opportunities to resolve this issue in a peaceful manner.

That is why Mexico insists on the importance of working towards a consensus position with respect to the future actions to be taken by the Security Council with respect to Iraq. Mexico urges members to work with greater creativity on this difficult issue. We must act with the conviction that creativity will lead to the strengthening of the Council and will consolidate its validity as an effective forum in which humanity can fully place its trust.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs for his kind words addressed to my country.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. Colin L. Powell, Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Mr. Powell (United States of America): Let me join my colleagues in congratulating you, Mr. President, on the assumption of the presidency. I know that you will lead us in these difficult days with great distinction. Let me also express to my German colleagues my thanks and admiration for the stewardship that they provided to the Council over the past month.

It seems to me that we are meeting today with one very, very important question before us. Has the Iraqi regime made the fundamental strategic and political decision to comply with United Nations Security Council resolutions and to rid itself of all of its weapons of mass destruction and all of the infrastructure for the development of weapons of mass destruction? It is a question of intent on the part of the Iraqi leadership. The answer to that question does not come from how many inspectors are present or how much more time should be given or how much more effort should be put into the inspection process. It is not a question of how many clusters of unanswered questions there are or whether more benchmarks are needed or enough unresolved issues have been put forward to be examined and analysed and conclusions reached. The answer depends entirely on whether Iraq has made the choice to actively cooperate in every possible way, in every possible manner, in the immediate and complete disarmament of itself — of its prohibited weapons. That is what resolution 1441 (2002) calls for.

I would like to thank Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei for their reports this morning, which shed more light on this difficult question. I listened to them very carefully to see if I would hear that, finally, Iraq had reached the point at which it understood that the will of the international community must now be obeyed. I was pleased to hear from both of those distinguished gentlemen that there has been some continuing progress on process and even some new activity with respect to substance. But I was sorry to learn that all of it is still coming in a grudging manner, that Iraq is still refusing to offer what was called for by resolution 1441 (2002): immediate, active and unconditional cooperation — not later, but immediate; not passive, but active; not conditional, but unconditional in every respect.

Unfortunately, in my judgement, despite some of the progress that has been mentioned, I still consider what I heard this morning to be a catalogue of non-cooperation. If Iraq genuinely wanted to disarm, we would not have to be worrying about setting up means of looking for mobile biological units or any units of that kind — they would be presented to us. We would not need an extensive programme to search for underground facilities that we know exist. The very fact that we must make these requests seems to me to show that Iraq is still not cooperating. The inspectors should not have to look under every rock, go to every crossroads and peer into every cave for evidence, for proof. We must not allow Iraq to shift the burden of proof onto the inspectors. Nor can we return to the failed bargain of resolution 1284 (1999), which offered partial relief for partial disclosure. Resolution 1441 (2002) requires full and immediate compliance, and we must hold Iraq to its terms.

We also heard this morning of an acceleration of Iraqi initiatives. I do not know whether we should call these things "initiatives". Whatever they are, Iraq's small steps are certainly not initiatives. They are not something that came forward willingly and freely from the Iraqis. They have been pulled out — or pressed out — by the possibility of military force, by the political will of the Security Council. These initiatives — if that is what some would choose to call them — have been taken only grudgingly; rarely unconditionally; and primarily under the threat of force.

We are told that these actions do not constitute immediate cooperation. But that is exactly what is demanded by resolution 1441 (2002). And even then, progress is often more apparent than real. I am very pleased that some Al Samoud 2 missiles are now being

broken up, although perhaps the process of breaking them up has paused for a moment. And I know that they are not toothpicks, but real missiles. But the problem is that we do not know how many missiles there are and how many toothpicks there are. We do not know whether or not the infrastructure to make more has been identified and broken up. We have evidence that shows that the infrastructure to make more missiles continues to remain within Iraq and has not yet been identified and destroyed.

There is still much more to do and, frankly, it will not be possible to do what we need to do unless we get the full and immediate cooperation that resolution 1441 (2002) and all previous resolutions demanded. It seems to me that the intention of the Iraqi regime to keep from turning over all of its weapons of mass destruction has not changed. It is not cooperating with the international community in the manner intended by resolution 1441 (2002). If Iraq had made that strategic decision to disarm, cooperation would be voluntary — even enthusiastic. It would not be coerced and pressured. That is the lesson we learned from South Africa and Ukraine, where officials did everything possible to ensure complete cooperation with inspectors.

I also listened to Mr. ElBaradei's report with great interest. As we all know, in 1991 the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was just days away from determining that Iraq did not have a nuclear programme. We soon found out otherwise. The IAEA is now reaching a similar conclusion. But we have to be very cautious. We have to make sure that we keep the books open, as Mr. ElBaradei said he would. There is dispute about some of these issues and some of the specific items. Mr. ElBaradei talked about the aluminium tubes that Iraq has tried to acquire over the years. We also know that, notwithstanding the report today, new information is available to us and, I believe, to the IAEA, about a European country where Iraq was found shopping for these kinds of tubes. That country has provided information to us and to the IAEA that the material properties and manufacturing tolerances required by Iraq are more exact by a factor of 50 per cent or more than those usually specified for rocket motor casings. Its experts concluded that the tolerances and specifications that Iraq was seeking cannot be justified for unguided rockets. I am very pleased that we will keep this issue open.

I also welcome the compilation of outstanding issues that Mr. Blix and his staff have provided to some of us and will make available to all of us. The United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) put together a solid piece of research that, when one reads the entire 167 pages, adds up fact by chilling fact to a damning record of 12 years of lies, deception and failure to come clean on the part of Iraq. That document is, in fact, a catalogue of 12 years of abject failure — not by the inspectors, but by Iraq. We looked carefully at the draft given to the UNMOVIC commissioners, which will be available more widely after this meeting, and we found nearly 30 instances of Iraq's refusal to provide credible evidence substantiating its claims. We have counted 17 examples of the previous inspectors actually uncovering evidence contradicting Iraqi claims. We see instance after instance of Iraq lying to the previous inspectors and planting false evidence — activities which we believe are still ongoing.

As members read the document, they will be able to see, page after page, how Iraq has obstructed the inspectors at nearly every turn over the years. By way of example, we have talked about the R-400 bombs. The report says that, during the period around 1992, Iraq several times changed its declaration about the quantity of bombs it had produced. In 1992 it declared that it had produced a total of 1,200 of those bombs, with the admission, finally, in 1995, after it was pulled out of them, of an offensive biological warfare programme. This number was subsequently changed to a total of 1,550 such bombs. Given the lack of specific information from Iraq, the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) could not calculate the total number of R-400 bombs that Iraq had produced for its programmes. Thus, the report says, it has proved impossible to verify the production and destruction details of R-400 bombs. UNMOVIC cannot discount the possibility that some R-400 bombs filled with chemical weapons and biological weapons remain in Iraq.

In this document, UNMOVIC refers to actions that Iraq could take to help to resolve this question: present any remaining R-400 bombs and all relevant moulds, provide more supporting documentation on production and inventory relating to the R-400 and R-400A bombs it manufactured, provide further documentation explaining the coding system that it used with the R-400-type bombs, including the coding

assigned to specific chemical and biological weapons agents, and provide credible evidence that the R-400 bomb production line stopped after September 1990.

This is just one example of the kind of documentation that the Council will be seeing. What leaps out is that these actions that Iraq is being asked to take, they could have taken many times over the preceding 12 years. We are not talking about "immediately"; we are talking about why it has not been done over the past 12 years, and about how can we now rely on assurances in the presence of this solid record of lying and deceit over the years.

These questions could easily have been cleared up in Iraq's 7 December declaration; there should not be these kinds of outstanding issues to work on. But there are, and we will all examine them carefully. The point is that this document conclusively shows that Iraq had and still has the capability to manufacture these kinds of weapons; that Iraq had and still has the capability to manufacture not only chemical but also biological weapons; and that Iraq had and still has literally tens of thousands of delivery systems, including increasingly capable and dangerous unmanned aerial vehicles. These are not new questions being presented for our consideration; these are old questions that have not been resolved and that could have been resolved in December with the declaration, or that could have been fully resolved over the past four months if Iraq had come forward and done what resolution 1441 (2002) wanted it to do.

In his report this morning, Mr. Blix remarked on the paucity of information on Iraq's programmes since 1998. We have all been working hard to fill that gap, but Iraq is the one that could fill that gap if it were truly complying with resolution 1441 (2002). It would be inundating the inspectors with new information, not holding it back and providing it begrudgingly. The draft document that we reviewed today in preparation for this meeting was 167 pages long. If Iraq were genuinely committed to disarmament, Mr. Blix's document would not be 167 pages of issues and questions; it would be thousands upon thousands of pages of answers about anthrax, about VX, about sarin, about unmanned aerial vehicles; it would set out in detail all of Iraq's prohibited programmes. Then, and only then, could the inspectors really do the credible job they need to do of verification, destruction and monitoring.

We have been down this road before. In March 1998, Saddam Hussain was also faced with the threat of military action. He responded with promises — promises to provide inspectors at that time with immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access. The then chief inspector reported to the Council a new spirit of cooperation, along with his hope that the inspectors could move very quickly to verify Iraq's disarmament. We know what happened to that hope: there was no progress on disarmament, and nine months later the inspectors found it necessary to withdraw.

I regret that not much has changed. Iraq's current behaviour — like the behaviour chronicled in Mr. Blix's document — reveals a strategic decision to continue to delay, to deceive, to try to throw us off the trail, to make it more difficult, to hope that the will of the international community will be fractured, that we will go off in different directions, that we will get bored with the task, that we will remove the pressure, that we will remove the force. And we know what has happened when that has been done in the past. We know that the Iraqis still are not volunteering information and that, when they do, what they are giving is often partial and misleading. We know that, when confronted with facts, the Iraqis are still changing their story to explain those facts, but not enough to give us the truth.

So, has the strategic decision been made to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction by the leadership in Baghdad? My judgement — I think, our judgement — has to be, clearly not. And this is now the reality that we, the Council, must deal with. Security Council membership carries heavy responsibility: a responsibility to the community of nations to take hard decisions on tough issues such as the one we are facing today. Last November, the Council stepped up to its responsibilities. We must not walk away; we must not find ourselves here this coming November with the pressure removed and with Iraq once again marching down the merry path to weapons of mass destruction, threatening the region, threatening the world.

If we fail to meet our responsibilities, the credibility of the Council and its ability to deal with all the critical challenges we face will suffer. As we sit here, let us not forget the horrors still going on in Iraq. Let us spare a moment to remember the suffering Iraqi people, whose treasure is spent on these kinds of programmes and not for their own benefit — people

who are being beaten, brutalized and robbed by Saddam and his regime. Colleagues, now is the time for the Council to send a clear message to Saddam that we have not been taken in by his transparent tactics. Nobody wants war, but it is clear that the limited progress we have seen, the process changes we have seen, and the slight substantive changes we have seen come from the presence of a large military force — nations that are willing to put their young men and women in harm's way in order to rid the world of these dangerous weapons. It does not come simply from resolutions, it does not come simply from inspectors; it comes from the will of the Council — the unified political will of the Council — and from the willingness to use force, if it comes to that, to make sure that we achieve the disarmament of Iraq.

Now is the time for the Council to tell Saddam that the clock has not been stopped by his stratagems and machinations. We believe that the draft resolution that has been put forward for action by the Council is appropriate and that in the very near future we should bring it before the Council for a vote. The clock continues to tick, and the consequences of Saddam Hussain's continued refusal to disarm will be very, very real.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary of State of the United States of America for the kind words that he addressed to me.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. Igor S. Ivanov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Ivanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Iraq problem has many aspects. On the one hand, we all agree that we must achieve the full and effective disarmament of Iraq, in conformity with Security Council resolution 1441 (2002). On the other hand, it is quite clear that the way in which we resolve this problem will determine not only the future of Iraq; in essence, we are now laying the foundations for ensuring peace and security in our time.

Therein lies the special responsibility that is now ours and the choice that we shall have to make. If, through our joint efforts, we succeed in resolving the Iraqi crisis in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, it will certainly have a positive effect on our efforts to settle other conflicts. Most significant, it will be an important step towards a new, just and secure world order. That is why Russia has consistently and resolutely sought to solve the Iraq problem on the basis of international law and of Security Council resolutions. Today, more than ever before, we have reason to state that this is not only the proper, but also the most reliable, way.

The report submitted by Mr. Blix demonstrates that, thanks to our united, energetic efforts and to the pressure that has been brought to bear on Baghdad from all sides, including through the buildup of a military presence, we have been able to achieve essential progress in implementing resolution 1441 (2002).

Let us take a look at the facts. There is an ongoing enhanced inspections regime in Iraq. International inspectors are being given immediate, unimpeded, unconditional and unrestricted access to any site. Active use is being made of helicopters and aircraft for the purpose of aerial surveillance during the course of inspections. On the whole, the Iraqi authorities' level of cooperation with inspectors is thoroughly different from the practice we saw previously under the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM).

Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei have repeatedly pointed out, including in their latest reports, problems in conducting interviews with Iraqi specialists. We agree with the view that the Iraqi leadership must more energetically encourage its citizens to take part in those interviews without minders. Judging from the latest reports, such interviews are gradually beginning to become the norm.

Qualitatively new changes with regard to carrying out concrete tasks have taken place during the inspection process. There is a real disarmament process in Iraq for the first time in many years. Weapons banned by resolutions of the Security Council are being eliminated. Those weapons include the Al Samoud 2 missiles, which were officially declared by the Iraqi side and which are now being destroyed under the supervision of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). Those weapons also include the discovered 122mm shells, which can carry poisonous chemical substances. The Iraqis have turned over fragments from R-400 aerial bombs to the inspectors for analysis. The experts are working on the possibility of analysing ground soil in areas where VX gas and anthrax growth media have been destroyed. Baghdad has also turned over to inspectors several dozen new documents, which are

now being analysed. I repeat that these are two facts that demonstrate that the inspectors' activities are developing.

We agree in principle with Mr. Blix's view that if the latest positive steps taken by Baghdad had been undertaken earlier, the results would be more convincing today. But it is nevertheless important that those steps were taken. As the heads of UNMOVIC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have pointed out, those steps open up the way to resolving outstanding problems. I wish once again to emphasize that they open up the way to resolving outstanding problems. This is important in principle.

Furthermore, I would like to draw the Council's attention to yet another aspect highlighted by Mr. Blix, namely, the long-term monitoring of Iraq's non-production of weapons of mass destruction. This is yet another important safety mechanism to ensure that Iraq will not produce weapons of mass destruction in the future.

In that connection, the question arises as to whether it is now reasonable to halt inspections, thereby halting the momentum achieved in the process of Iraq's disarmament. Let us take another look.

What is really in the genuine interest of the world community — continuing the albeit difficult but clearly fruitful results of the inspectors' work or resorting to the use of force, which will inevitably result in enormous loss of life and which is fraught with serious and unpredictable consequences for regional and international stability? It is our deep conviction that the possibilities for disarming Iraq through political means do exist. They really exist, and that cannot but be acknowledged. What we need now is not new Security Council resolutions; we have enough of those. We now need active support for the inspectors to carry out their tasks.

Russia is firmly in favour of continuing and strengthening inspection activities and of making them more focused in nature. That goal would be furthered by the speedy submission — in the days to come — of an UNMOVIC programme of work for the approval of the Security Council, a programme that includes a list of key remaining disarmament tasks. Such tasks should be formulated with the utmost clarity; and they should be realizable. That would enable us to evaluate objectively Iraq's level of cooperation and, most importantly, to provide an exhaustive answer to all the remaining open questions regarding banned Iraqi military programmes.

Of course, we all face a difficult choice. Hardly anyone among us could claim to be in possession of the absolute truth. It is therefore quite natural for different points of view to be expressed during the course of our discussion. But such differences should not lead to a rift among us. We are all standing on the same side of the barricade. We all share common values. Only by acting in solidarity will we effectively face up to new global threats and challenges. We are certain that the Security Council has to emerge united and strong from the Iraq crisis, not weakened and divided. Russia will continue to work towards that goal.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Dominique Galouzeau de Villepin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

Mr. Galouzeau de Villepin (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to begin by saying how pleased France is that the Security Council is being presided over on this decisive day by Guinea, an African country.

I would like to thank Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei for the presentation they have just made. Their reports testify to the regular progress in the disarmament of Iraq.

What have the inspectors told us? They have told us that Iraq has been actively cooperating with them for a month; that, with the progressive destruction of Al Samoud 2 missiles and their equipment, substantial progress has been made in the area of ballistics; and that new prospects are opening up with the recent questioning of several scientists. Significant evidence of real disarmament has now been observed. That, indeed, is the key to resolution 1441 (2002).

I would solemnly like to ask a question in this body, the same question being asked by the people of the world: Why should we today engage in a war with Iraq?

I would like also to ask: Why smash instruments that have just proved their effectiveness? Why choose division, when our unity and our resolve are leading Iraq to rid itself of its weapons of mass destruction?

Why should we wish to proceed by force, at any cost, when we can succeed peacefully?

War is always an acknowledgement of failure. Let us not resign ourselves to the irreparable.

Before making our choice, let us weigh the consequences; let us consider the effects of our decisions.

Indeed, it is clear to all that in Iraq, we are resolutely moving towards the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction programmes.

The method that we have chosen works. The information supplied by Baghdad has been verified by the inspectors and is leading to the elimination of banned ballistic equipment.

We must proceed the same way with all the other programmes — with information, verification, destruction. We already have useful information in the biological and chemical domains. In response to the inspectors' questions, Iraq must give us further information in a timely fashion, so that we may obtain the most precise knowledge possible about any existing inventories or programmes. On the basis of that information, we will destroy all the components that are discovered, as we are doing for the missiles, and we will determine the truth of the matter.

With regard to nuclear weapons, Mr. ElBaradei's statements confirm that we are approaching the time when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will be able to certify the dismantlement of the Iraq programme.

What conclusions can we draw? That Iraq, according to the very terms used by the inspectors, represents less of a danger to the world than it did in 1991, and that we can achieve the objective of effectively disarming that country.

Let us keep the pressure on Baghdad. The adoption of resolution 1441 (2002); the assumption of converging positions by the vast majority of the world's nations; diplomatic actions by the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement — all of these common efforts are bearing fruit.

The American and British military presence in the region lends support to our collective resolve. We all recognize the effectiveness of the pressure that is being exerted by the international community. We must use it to achieve our objective of disarmament through inspections. As the European Union noted, these inspections cannot continue indefinitely. The pace must therefore be stepped up.

That is why France wishes today to make three proposals.

First, let us ask the inspectors to establish a hierarchy of disarmament tasks and, on that basis, to present us, as quickly as possible, with the work programme provided for by resolution 1284 (1999). We need to know immediately which priority issues could constitute the key disarmament tasks to be carried out by Iraq.

Secondly, we propose that the inspectors submit a progress report every three weeks. That will make the Iraqi authorities understand that under no circumstances may they interrupt their efforts.

Finally, let us establish a schedule for assessing the implementation of the work programme. Resolution 1284 (2002) provides for a time frame of 120 days. We are willing to shorten it, if the inspectors consider it feasible.

The military agenda must not dictate the calendar of inspections. We agree to accelerated timetables, but we cannot accept an ultimatum as long as the inspectors are reporting progress in terms of cooperation. That would mean war. That would lead to the Security Council's being stripped of its responsibilities. By imposing a deadline of a few days, would we merely be seeking a pretext for war?

I will say it again: as a permanent member of the Security Council, France will not allow a resolution to be adopted that authorizes the automatic use of force.

Let us consider the anguish and the expectations of people all over the world, in all our countries, from Cairo to Rio, from Algiers to Pretoria, from Rome to Jakarta. Indeed, the stakes go beyond the fate of Iraq alone.

Let us be clear-sighted. We are defining a method for resolving crises. We are choosing how to define the world we want our children to live in.

This is true in the case of North Korea, and in the case of south Asia, where we have not yet found the path towards a lasting resolution of disputes. It is true in the case of the Middle East. Can we continue to wait while acts of violence multiply?

These crises have many roots — political, religious and economic. Their origins lie deep in the turmoil of history. There may be some who believe that these problems can be resolved by force, thereby creating a new order. But this is not what France believes. On the contrary, we believe that the use of force can give rise to resentment and to hatred, and fuel a clash of identities and of civilizations — something that our generation has a prime responsibility to avert.

To those who believe that war would be the quickest way to disarm Iraq, I can reply that it would create divisions and cause wounds that will be long in healing. How many victims will there be? How many grieving families?

We do not subscribe to what may be the other objectives of a war. Is it a question of regime change in Baghdad? No one underestimates the cruelty of that dictatorship or the need to do everything possible to promote human rights. But that is not the objective of resolution 1441 (2002), and force is certainly not the best way of bringing about democracy. In this case and in others, it would encourage a dangerous instability.

Is it a question of fighting terrorism? War would only increase it, and we could then be faced with a new wave of violence. Let us beware of playing into the hands of those who want a clash of civilizations or a clash of religions.

Finally, is it a question of reshaping the political landscape of the Middle East? In that case, we run the risk of exacerbating tensions in a region already characterized by great instability. Furthermore, the large number of communities and religions in Iraq itself increases the danger of a potential break-up.

We all have the same demands. We want more security and more democracy. But there is another logic besides that of force. There is another path; there are other solutions.

We understand the profound sense of insecurity with which the American people have been living since the tragedy of 11 September 2001. The entire world shared the sorrow of New York and of America, struck at the heart. I say this in the name of our friendship for the American people and in the name of our common values: freedom, justice, tolerance.

But there is nothing today to indicate a link between the Iraqi regime and Al Qaeda. Will the world be a safer place after a military intervention in Iraq? Let me state my country's conviction: it will not.

Four months ago, we unanimously adopted a system of inspections to eliminate the threat of potential weapons of mass destruction and guarantee our security. Today we cannot accept, without contradicting ourselves, a conflict that might well weaken it.

Yes, we, too, want more democracy in the world. But we can achieve this objective only within the framework of a true global democracy based on respect, sharing, and the awareness of genuinely common values and a common destiny. Its core is the United Nations.

Let us make no mistake. In the face of multiple and complex threats, there is no single response, but there is a single requirement: we must remain united.

Today we must together invent a new future for the Middle East. Let us not forget the immense hope created by the efforts of the Madrid Conference and the Oslo Agreement. Let us not forget that the Middle East crisis represents our greatest challenge in terms of security and justice. For us, the Middle East, like Iraq, represents a priority commitment.

This calls for even greater ambition and even greater boldness. We should envision a region transformed through peace, and civilizations that, through the courageous act of reaching out to each other, can rediscover their self-confidence and an international prestige that is equal to their long history and their aspirations.

In a few days, we shall solemnly fulfil our responsibility through a vote. We will be facing an essential choice: disarming Iraq through war or through peace. This crucial choice includes others. It includes the international community's ability to resolve the many current or future crises. It carries with it a vision of the world, a concept of the role of the United Nations.

France therefore believes that to make this choice, to make it in good conscience in this forum of international democracy, before their peoples and

before the world, heads of State or Government must meet again here, in New York, in the Security Council.

This is in everyone's interest. We must rediscover the fundamental vocation of the United Nations: to allow each of its Members to assume its responsibilities in the face of the Iraqi crisis, but also to seize together the destiny of a world in crisis and thus recreate the conditions for our future unity.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France for the kind words he addressed to my country and to Africa.

I call next on His Excellency Mr. Tang Jiaxuan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of China.

Mr. Tang Jiaxuan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First, I wish to congratulate Guinea on its assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I also wish to congratulate the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany on his outstanding work during Germany's presidency last month. I also wish to thank Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei for their briefings and for the tremendous efforts they have made to fulfil the mandate given by the Security Council.

Four months ago, in this Chamber, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1441 (2002) in a spirit of unity and cooperation. The adoption of that resolution fully manifested the determination of the Council to destroy the weapons of mass destruction possessed by Iraq and truly reflected the desire of the international community for a political settlement of the Iraqi issue. It is precisely for that reason that the resolution has been widely welcomed and supported by all countries the world over.

Undoubtedly, it is an arduous task for us to ensure the implementation of the relevant Council resolutions and the full and comprehensive destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. However, it is gratifying to note that much progress has been made in the weapons inspections, thanks to the unremitting efforts of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Judging from today's reports by the two inspection bodies, resolution 1441 (2002) has been implemented smoothly on the whole, with progress made and results achieved. It is true that there are also problems and difficulties in the inspection process. That is exactly why it is highly necessary to continue the inspections. We believe that, as long as we keep to the road of political settlement, the goal of destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction could still be attained.

Resolution 1441 (2002) did not come easily. Given the current situation, we need resolve and determination and, more important, patience and wisdom. The Council therefore needs to maintain its unity and cooperation more than ever so as to preserve its authority. We believe that the Council should provide strong support and guidance to the two inspection bodies in their work, let them continue inspections and seek the truth until they have fulfilled the mandate of resolution 1441 (2002). At the same time, we also urge the Iraqi Government to take further effective measures in earnest to strengthen its cooperation with the inspectors on matters of substance and to the creation of conditions necessary for political settlement. Under the current circumstances, there is no reason to shut the door to peace. Therefore, we are not in favour of a new resolution, particularly one authorizing the use of force.

The Iraqi issue bears on peace and development in the Gulf region and in the world at large. With a view to finding a solution to that issue, we must take into full account the shared interests of all nations and the long-term interests of human development. Now that we have entered the twenty-first century, peace and development still remain the major themes of our times. All countries in the world, faced with the common tasks of maintaining peace and achieving development and prosperity, desperately need a stable and peaceful international environment.

Among all things in the universe, human beings are of paramount importance, and peace is the most precious. Over the past months, right in this Chamber, we have heard many times, from many United Nations Member States, strong appeals to resolve the Iraqi issue politically. Outside this Chamber, we have also heard justified cries of "peace, not war" from the peoples of many countries. The power of the Security Council derives from all United Nations Member States and from the peoples of all nations. We have no reason to remain indifferent to those strong demands and outcries. In order for the Security Council to be responsible to history and to safeguard the common interests of all peoples in the world, the Chinese Government strongly appeals to the Council to shoulder its responsibility and to do all it can to avoid

war and to maintain its efforts to achieve a political settlement.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of China for the kind words he addressed to my country.

I call on Her Excellency Ms. Soledad Alvear Valenzuela, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile.

Mrs. Alvear Valenzuela (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I too would like to start by congratulating Guinea on its assumption of the presidency for this month, at a time when very important decisions are going to be made. I would also like to congratulate Germany on its brilliant handling of our affairs last month.

Chile is attending this Council meeting to hear once again reports of the inspectors of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Committee (UNMOVIC) and of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We do so with a positive mindset, despite the critical nature of the moment. We are convinced that we must arrive at an agreement in this body on how to demand Iraq's effective disarmament. We are all united by the common will to responsibly apply the principles that the Charter requires this body to safeguard.

I should like to thank Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei for their presentations on the inspections carried out by UNMOVIC and IAEA. Their reports contain detailed accounts of the work of inspection and verification undertaken in various areas. We value their contributions highly in today's task of assessing Iraq's degree of compliance with resolution 1441 (2002).

The two reports allow us to infer that Iraq's attitude of cooperation, even at this late stage in the multilateral process, is inadequate. If we compare it to the categorical language of resolution 1441 (2002) and the sense of urgency underlying it, we can only conclude that this cooperation is not full. That fact is of deep concern to my country. While they may be important steps, the signs of progress in specific areas that have been indicated in recent reports, such as the destruction of the Al Samoud 2 missiles, do not detract from the general conclusion.

Chile reaffirms the need to achieve the immediate, full and effective disarmament of Iraq. In that context, we reiterate our urgent appeal to Iraq to actively and unconditionally cooperate with the inspectors, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Council.

At this stage of our deliberations, I wish to reiterate the guiding principles of our foreign policy, on which the position of Chile in respect of the crisis in Iraq is based.

Multilateralism is a permanent interest of Chile's. Multilateral diplomacy prevails, as has been pointed out here, and this Council is the competent body to address matters of international peace and security. We reaffirm the centrality of the United Nations and the Security Council in that process. Their resolutions must be complied with fully. Such compliance is indispensable to the credibility of the United Nations and to the prevalence of the decisions of this main organ.

We support a solution in keeping with international law and with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. This is the only source of legitimacy for our collective agreements and decisions. We emphasize the need to adopt collective measures to prevent and eliminate threats to peace. We actively search for every way to reach a peaceful solution. This is a principle that we have historically upheld and we are determined to continue working to achieve it.

We, as those responsible for putting an agreement together, are at a critical moment. In recent months, Chile has made every effort to contribute to an agreed decision leading to the peaceful disarmament of Iraq. That is why we have appealed to the five permanent members and, on that basis, endeavoured to find a point of convergence among widely divergent positions.

To that end, we have advocated the continuation of rigorous inspections subject to a time limit. That would respond to the urgency underlying resolution 1441 (2002). We have also pointed out that the use of force contemplated in Chapter VII can be invoked only when all peaceful means of disarming Iraq have been exhausted.

In recent days, we have noted a greater degree of flexibility that has attenuated the rigidity observed early in this process in the Council, which was characterized by an insufficient readiness to engage in dialogue, reconcile differences and open avenues of understanding and negotiation. Chile has repeatedly

affirmed in this forum, as well as in its consultations with permanent and elected members of the Council, its conviction that, through unity and collective responsibility, we can reach an agreement.

The statements we have heard lead us to believe that a solution which reconciles the yearning for peace with disarmament remains possible. We are convinced that this last opportunity for peace must embrace a strengthening of inspections with Iraq, with clear deadlines and concrete demands, in keeping with the sense of urgency expressed in resolution 1441 (2002). The Iraqi regime, which has exposed its own people to great suffering, has the political and moral responsibility to achieve total disarmament.

Chile wishes to reiterate its vocation for peace. The Government and people of my country aspire to finding a solution to this crisis consonant with that vocation and in the framework of the United Nations, an Organization that we helped to found in 1945. We hope that every single member of this Council will do everything within its power to reach the agreement that humankind expects from us.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile for her kind words addressed to my country.

I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Ana Palacio, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain.

Ms. Palacio (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by joining those who have expressed their gratification, Sir, at seeing your country, Guinea — and with Guinea, Africa — presiding over the Council at this crucial time for peace and security in the world. On behalf of Spain, I wish you a successful and effective conduct of our activities.

I also wish to highlight the excellent work accomplished by Germany at a very complex moment.

On 14 February, I opened my statement by pointing out that, along with millions of citizens of the world, I was hoping to hear just one sentence from the inspectors: that Saddam Hussain was fully, unconditionally and actively complying with resolution 1441 (2002).

I did not hear it on that day, nor have I heard it today. I also have the feeling today that we run the risk of not seeing the forest for the trees. The concrete progress achieved by the inspectors in their commendable work, to which I pay tribute on behalf of Spain, and the gestures made by Saddam Hussain are distracting us from the objective defined by the international community 12 years ago: the complete disarmament of the Iraqi regime.

We have been marking time for 12 years. I have two questions to raise that I believe are fundamental for us all: Are we discharging our obligations as members of the Security Council? What message are we sending to the world? According to the United Nations Charter, the mission of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security, to identify threats thereto and to define action to be taken.

I can only say that the threat remains and that Saddam Hussain has yet to comply with the resolutions of this Council. This is happening 12 years after the adoption of resolution 687 (1991) and four months after the adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), which, as the Council will remember, constituted the final opportunity.

So, 12 years later, we still find ourselves in the same situation as in 1991. Twelve years later, the principal actor is the same: Saddam Hussain. Twelve years later, the threat is the same: his weapons of mass destruction. Twelve years later, his attitude is identical: a profound contempt for international law and the clear intention to divide us. Twelve years later, his strategy remains the same: to deceive us. How much longer? How much time is needed to take the strategic decision to collaborate fully, actively and unconditionally? I am afraid that we are facing a question whose answer everyone knows but which many prefer to ignore.

Instead of sending a solid and cohesive message, the Council runs the risk of becoming a media platform showcasing our differences and making our work even harder.

Through continuous and systematic misrepresentation of the facts, Saddam is achieving something extraordinarily dangerous. He has managed to get many to identify the Security Council — the guarantor of international legitimacy — as the aggressor, while he identifies himself as the victim. He has managed to divide the international community, as the Foreign Minister of Mexico said so well a moment ago. He has also managed to reverse the burden of proof, shifting onto us a responsibility that is his alone.

How could we have come to a situation where a dictator that has provoked wars, invaded countries, gassed his own population, trampled all existing human rights and flouted the law for 12 years is now putting the credibility of the Council in jeopardy?

My second question is, what message are we sending? It is impossible not to realize that only maximum pressure and the credible threat of force make an impression on the Iraqi regime. Let me recall that this is the underlying logic of resolution 1441 (2002) and of the draft resolution sponsored by the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain, which will soon be submitted to the Council.

I welcome and appreciate the progress that has been achieved by the inspectors, in particular the destruction of the Al Samoud missiles. But all of a sudden proof of the existence of programmes of weapons of mass destruction, whose existence was denied until now, appears as if by magic — because of the 300,000 soldiers deployed in the region. Or we suddenly hear of the existence of missiles and motors that are banned under international law. That conduct confirms our fears. Those weapons exist. They have not been destroyed. They can be used again.

As Secretary of State Powell said, if Saddam Hussain was lying before when he was hiding those weapons, why should we believe him now when, after revealing their presence, he claims that he has destroyed all remaining weapons, without our being able to detect a genuine will to disarm.

Given those questions, what message should the Council send? First, we will not tolerate any more of Saddam Hussain's games. He did not comply in 1991. He deceived the United Nations Special Commission in 1995. He remained free of inspections for almost four years. And now, even when resolution 1441 (2002) indicates that it represents the final opportunity, he is once again trying to prevent its implementation.

The Council has to state also that we cannot encourage, through action or failure to act, those possessing weapons of mass destruction who feel that they can systematically violate international law with impunity. The Council should send the clear message that it is very aware that the threat looming over us is more serious than ever and that it concerns the confluence of the existence of weapons of mass destruction, their possible use by terrorist groups and the criminality of political leaders who make use of both those weapons and terrorists.

The Security Council has to send a clear message that it considers that the time has come to stop being a hostage to those, who in seeking their own objectives, mistakenly interpret our aspiration to peace as a sign of weakness. The Council must make it clear that it has always advocated not Iraq's containment or its partial disarmament but its complete disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, in particular chemical and bacteriological weapons, and that this should be done peacefully, which requires full Iraqi cooperation. And if such cooperation is lacking, Iraq alone will be responsible for the consequences.

Finally, it must be made very clear that the Council must assume its responsibility before the entire world to respond to this situation.

Disarming Iraq is not a question of more inspectors or more time. That, to paraphrase a French thinker, is merely the strategy of impotence. With respect to nuclear material and missiles, we can envisage the possibility of achieving results without the regime's willingness to disarm or even its proactive collaboration. But that is not true for chemical and bacteriological weapons. We all know that. It is particularly in the area of the disarmament of chemical and bacteriological weapons that disarmament can be achieved only if there is political will on the part of the Iraqi regime. Inspectors will naturally have to continue for the time that is necessary and with the means that are necessary. But it must be done on the basis of a radical change in the willingness of Saddam Hussain's regime to disarm. So far, Iraq has given no credible signs of possessing the will to disarm.

I have listened to those who consider that decisions the Council may adopt will provoke a great loss of human lives and great damage in Iraq. They criticize that and hold us responsible for it. No, it is others such as Saddam Hussain who are responsible for the deaths of millions through their wars, invasions, actions and decisions. It is others such as Saddam Hussain who use chemical weapons. It is others such as Saddam Hussain who destroy entire families, peoples, nations. It is not the Security Council that is responsible. We are seeking international peace and security, because we all want peace. But we want a peace that is safe and that ensures that those weapons will not be used by Iraq and that they will not fall into

the hands of terrorist groups, which could use them to achieve their own ends. To act otherwise is to harbour false hopes and to look for arrangements that could only seriously undermine the credibility and effectiveness of the Council and even the international peace and stability that we all seek.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain for her kind words addressed to my country and to Africa, as well as for her encouragement.

I now call on The Right Honourable Jack Straw, MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Straw (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency, and by wishing you well at a very important moment. I also echo and underline the thanks which you so generously gave to Vice-Chancellor Joschka Fischer and Ambassador Gunter Pleuger for the excellent way in which they chaired the Security Council during the month of February. I would also like to thank Mr. ElBaradei and Mr. Blix for their reports and to place on record my Government's appreciation for their work and the work in very difficult circumstances of all the staff of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC).

I have listened with very great care to what my colleagues speaking before me have said. We are all agreed that Iraq must be fully disarmed of weapons of mass destruction and that Iraq's failure to cooperate immediately, unconditionally and actively with the inspectors has to be dealt with. As we negotiated resolution 1441 (2002), the evidence was there for all to see that Iraq had been and remained in material breach. All 15 members voted to give the Iraqi regime a final opportunity to comply with its obligations.

The first question before the Council, therefore, is this: has Iraq taken this final opportunity to disarm? I was very much struck, while listening with care to all the statements — and of course people have different points of view — by the fact that nobody — not one minister in the Council — said, in my hearing, that Iraq is now fully, actively and immediately in compliance with resolution 1441 (2002). It has not so far taken this final opportunity. If anybody in the Chamber or outside has any doubt about that conclusion, then I commend to them the so-called clusters report on the outstanding issues concerning Iraq's proscribed weapons programme, which, as a member of the commission behind the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, I have already had the privilege of reading. As Mr. Blix knows, I have read all 167 pages of that report in every particular. It is a painstaking piece of work and I thank Mr. Blix for publishing it. But it is also a chilling read about the failure of Iraq to comply with successive resolutions of the Council each day of the past 12 years.

There has not been active cooperation in the areas which matter. As a result, UNMOVIC has not been able to resolve any substantive issues outstanding from 1998. As we all know — this is a point to which I shall return shortly — Iraq refused to admit inspectors for three years after resolution 1284 (1999) was adopted, agreeing to them only under threat of enforcement action and in an attempt to frustrate resolution 1441 (2002). Iraq has dragged its feet on as many elements of procedural and substantive cooperation as possible.

I would like to draw attention to just one aspect, which is often overlooked. Mr. Blix referred to the fact that Iraq recently informed us that following the adoption of a presidential decree prohibiting private individuals and mixed companies from engaging in work related to weapons of mass destruction, further legislation on this subject is to be enacted. No one should be taken in by that as a concession. Iraq was ordered on 2 October 1991 — I have here the instruction from the Council — to enact legislation, in conformity with international law, to do precisely what it is now saying it intends to do. What is more, what it has so far done covers not the operations of the State but only those of private individuals and mixed companies. So 12 years on, 12 years after the world saw that Iraq had developed, under the world's nose, weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems — nuclear systems, biological systems, chemical systems — Iraq is still refusing to pass a law saying that such activity by members of State Government authorities is illegal.

This is not something for which they needed to search. It is not something for which they need the assistance of inspectors or ground-penetrating radar. It is something they could and should have done back in October 1991 and that, notwithstanding all the pressure, they are still refusing to do.

Then we come to the issue of interviews. As Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei have reported, Iraq has done everything possible to prevent unrestricted, unrecorded interviews. There have now been 12 private interviews between the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency against a United Nations Special Commission list of 3,500 people previously associated with weapons of mass destruction programmes. We know for a fact that all of those 12 — and all prospective interviewees — were threatened and intimidated by the Iraqi regime beforehand and told that their exchanges were being recorded. The interviewees were not being recorded by bugs and tape recorders that they were told to take into the meetings. But they were told that they were going to be recorded in any event by bugs placed in the walls of the recording halls. I understand that scientists most likely to have the most incriminating evidence have been locked away by the Iraqi security services. There have been no interviews in the safe havens outside Iraq — not one. And the restrictions placed on the interviewees is itself the most incriminating evidence that Saddam has something to hide.

The Al Samoud 2 episode further confirms Iraq's familiar tactics. Iraq under-declared the number of missile engines it — illegally — imported. It declared 131 engines but imported 380. Iraq also falsely declared that the missile had a maximum range of 150 kilometres when it was designed — it was not an accident — to fly considerably in excess of that. We know that Iraq's agreeing to the destruction process, necessary as it is, is a calculation that it can satisfy the Council with a partial response in only one of the 29 categories of unresolved disarmament questions.

I must say, with all due respect to good colleagues, that it defies experience to believe that continuing inspections with no firm end date, as I believe has been suggested in the French, German and Russian memorandum, will achieve complete disarmament if — as the memorandum acknowledges — Iraq's full and active cooperation is not immediately forthcoming. The memorandum is not even a formula for containment, given Iraq's proven ability to exploit the existing sanctions regime to continue to develop weapons of mass destruction. We knew nothing about the missile engines. We knew nothing about the rest of this — imported under our noses in breach of the sanctions regime — until we passed resolution 1441 (2002).

To find a peaceful solution to the current crisis, the Council must not retreat from the demands it set out clearly in resolution 1441 (2002). What we need is an irreversible and strategic decision by Iraq to disarm; a strategic decision by Iraq to yield to the inspectors all of its weapons of mass destruction and all relevant information, which it could and should have provided at any time in the past 12 years; a strategic decision like that taken by South Africa when it decided freely to abandon its secret nuclear programme.

I greatly welcome the progress the inspectors have reported. My earnest wish, and that of my Government, has all along been to achieve the disarmament of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, if humanly possible by peaceful means. But if we are to achieve that, we have to recognize that the progress which has been reported represents only the tip of a very large iceberg of huge unfinished business required of Iraq.

Just as I welcome the progress about which we have heard, I say to the Council that there are very serious lessons for us to draw from what has been reported. Let us consider what has changed. Why has there been this sudden bout of activity when there was no progress at all for weeks before, and when for months and years before that, Saddam Hussein was re-arming under our noses?

It is not our policy which has changed. It is not international law which has changed — there have been from the beginning the clearest instructions to Saddam to disarm. No, what has changed is one thing and one thing only: the pressure on the regime. Mr. Blix said in his opening remarks that the changes may well be due to strong outside pressure. That is absolutely right. In his remarks, Dominique de Villepin described a lot of diplomatic pressure by the Non-Aligned Movement, the European Union, the Arab League and many others. I greatly welcome all of that diplomatic pressure.

Dominique went on to say that the forces of the United States and of the United Kingdom lend support to that pressure. With due respect for my good friend, I think it is the other way around. What has happened is that all that pressure was there for every day of 12 years. In Mr. Blix's carefully chosen words, the strong outside pressure is — and let us be blunt about this —

the presence of more than 200,000 young men and women of the United States and of the United Kingdom, willing to put their lives on the line for the sake of this body, the United Nations.

Dominique also said that the choice before us was one between disarmament by peace and disarmament by war. That is a false choice. I wish it were that easy, because then we would not be obliged to have this discussion; we could all put up our hands for disarmament by peace and go home. The paradox we face is that the only way we are going to achieve disarmament by peace of a rogue regime that, all of us know, has been in defiance of the Council for the past 12 years — the only way that we can achieve its disarmament of weapons mass destruction, which, the Council has said, pose a threat to international peace and security — is by backing our diplomacy with the credible threat of force.

I wish that we lived in a different world where this was not necessary, but, sadly, we live in this world, and the choice is not ours as to how this disarmament takes place — the choice is Saddam Hussain's. Would that it were ours, because it would be so easy, but sadly, it is not. And there is only one possible, sensible conclusion that we can draw: we have to increase the pressure on Saddam Hussain. We have to put this man to the test. He has shown this week that he does not need more time to comply, he can act with astonishing speed when he chooses to. What is more, he knows exactly what has to be done. He knows this because he is the originator of the information. The Iraqis do not need a Mr. Hans Blix and all his staff to produce 167 pages of forensic questions; they have the answer book already. Look how fast they acted to produce 13,000 pages of a declaration, albeit much of it irrelevant. It may take time to fabricate further falsehoods, but the truth takes only seconds to tell.

And I should just like to make something clear on the issue of automaticity, which, again, my good friend Dominique raised. Nothing has ever been automatic about the threat of force or the use of force; it has always been conditional. It would be utterly irresponsible and in defiance of our solemn duties to the Council for us to walk into a situation where force was used automatically. And, although the canard has been around that some of us were in the business of using force automatically, the truth is that it is not being used automatically, it should not be used automatically, it will not be used automatically, and nothing to which my Government has ever put its name has ever suggested that that would be the case.

What we seek is compliance by Saddam Hussain with resolution 1441 (2002). And I make this point: we are not suggesting that, in a matter of days, Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei would be able to complete all their work — that they would be able to verify the disarmament of Iraq. No one is suggesting that. But what we are suggesting is that it is perfectly possible, achievable and necessary for Saddam Hussain and the Iraqi regime to bring themselves into compliance so that, instead of us all admitting — either by our words or by our silence, as we have today — that Saddam is not in full compliance, that he has not taken a further opportunity and the final opportunity, we can say the reverse and can celebrate the achievement of the fine ideals of the United Nations and the upholding of one of the central points of the work programme of the United Nations — that we back our diplomacy, if necessary, with the credible threat of force.

As founding members of the United Nations and permanent members of the Security Council, we remain committed to exploring every reasonable option for a peaceful outcome and every prospect of a Council consensus. In the light of that and of what I have said, I shall tell the Council that, on behalf of the sponsors of our draft resolution — the Kingdom of Spain, the Government of the United States and the Government of the United Kingdom — I am asking the Secretariat to circulate an amendment, which we are introducing, that will specify a further period beyond the adoption of a resolution for Iraq to take the final opportunity to disarm and to bring itself into compliance. But the Council must send Iraq the clear message that we will resolve this crisis on United Nations terms: the terms that the Council established four months ago when we unanimously adopted resolution 1441 (2002).

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of Great Britain for his kind words.

I now call on His Excellency Mr. Georges Chikoti, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola.

Mr. Chikoti (Angola): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March, and to thank Germany for its brilliant presidency during the month of February.

I join preceding speakers in thanking and expressing my appreciation, on behalf of the Government of Angola, to the chief weapons inspector, Mr. Blix, and to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. ElBaradei, for their work, competence and professionalism, as demonstrated in the reports presented to the Council this morning.

Today, we are laying yet another brick in constructing a world free from threats to international peace and security. Millions around the world are carefully following these proceedings, placing their trust, faith and confidence in the Security Council's ability to exercise prudence and justice in the fulfilment of its mandate. Through resolution 1441 (2002) and other relevant resolutions, the Council unanimously recognized Iraq's non-compliance with previous resolutions and its proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, those resolutions and others repeatedly warned Iraq that continued violations of its obligations could result in serious consequences.

Once again, today's report attests to some measures undertaken by Iraq to comply with resolution 1441 (2002). We welcome this development. Such is the case with the destruction of Al Samoud 2 missiles and others to provide credible and verifiable information concerning biological and chemical agents. However, the Government of Iraq's cooperation with the process remains relatively insufficient. In my delegation's view, this posture by the Iraqi authorities is in no way assisting us in our mission and in the discharge of our mandate. Iraqi cooperation is, indeed, an essential element.

We should recognize that Iraq has made some progress with regard to increased cooperation with the inspectors. This has usually occurred when associated with specific benchmarks and dates, signalling the makings of a model for strengthening the scope and the intrusiveness of inspections. Under the present circumstances, such an endeavour seems to be the most suitable way to maintain the unity of the Security Council and to continue a course that can lead to a peaceful solution of the crisis and spare the Iraqi people, the region and the world an armed conflict and its dangerous consequences. The manner in which the Security Council deals with the disarmament of Iraq, and the Council's resolve, will set the standard to which we will be held for the advancement of peace and security in the world.

The Angolan Government shares the international community's position that the Government of Iraq must disarm by providing immediate, unimpeded, unconditional and unrestricted access to sites and information deemed relevant to the disarmament process. Furthermore, my delegation joins other Member States in calling upon Iraq to take a more energetic and proactive role in the destruction and subsequent documentation of banned weapons, so as to assure the international community that it is indeed free from weapons of mass destruction and associated infrastructure.

The disarmament of Iraq represents an unequivocal and unconditional demand of the international community. The Council should make absolutely clear, and send a strong signal to the authorities in Iraq, that our debate ought not to be construed as unwillingness to act, but rather as a discussion about how best to act jointly to attain our common objective of effectively disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction.

Acting with all the other members of the Security Council, we stand ready to fully cooperate and to assume our responsibility to find the most appropriate solution to the crisis we are facing. In that context, the international community, regional and subregional organizations and international public opinion have been calling for the peaceful disarmament of Iraq. Organizations such as the African Union, the Non-Aligned Movement, the League of Arab States and the European Union have expressed their political, economic and humanitarian concerns over the use of force. They have also endorsed a peaceful resolution of this crisis as the most suitable course for the Iraqi people and the rest of the world. These constitute valid and legitimate concerns, but are not, and cannot be, interpreted or transformed into an unwillingness to act.

In conclusion, the essence of the issue before us is not whether or not the Security Council is unable to act to enforce its decisions. This body stands united in its determination to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. But its responsibilities include exhausting all diplomatic and peaceful means to achieve such disarmament. The Charter binds us to that commitment, which we are upholding.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): The Security Council is today holding its first public meeting of the month. I would like to express my delegation's pleasure at seeing you, Sir, preside over our deliberations, especially during this important period in the history of international relations, which could have an impact on the Council. Rest assured that the entire delegation of Cameroon is ready to extend its fraternal cooperation.

I would also like to extend my country's congratulations to Germany on the excellent work it carried out during its presidency of the Council in the month of February.

Lastly, I welcome the presence among us of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan.

We are meeting this morning to discuss the quarterly report of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) (S/2003/232, annex), which its Executive Chairman, Mr. Hans Blix, has just presented to us with his customary eloquence. UNMOVIC's report, the twelfth of its kind, was, for good reason, awaited by the international community with particular eagerness. Overall, its contents are factual, and follow up on the progress reports made to the Council in the months of December, January and February. In addition, Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei have provided us with additional information during their briefings. That information serves as a useful complement to the report and should lead to an updated discussion. I thank them for that.

My delegation is pleased to note that the momentum of inspections, which was interrupted in 1998, has once again been well established. No doubt, the credit for that goes to Mr. Blix and his teams in New York and Baghdad, as well as to Mr. ElBaradei.

There is of course no deadline in resolution 1441 (2002), which is the roadmap to the disarmament of Iraq. But that resolution does establish a process whose major phase should be carried out in a short time frame. As we see it, the resolution does not provide for endless activity.

What does the report before us say? It says that real progress has been achieved in the areas of process and procedure. It also reveals interesting results in some areas, ranging from the beginning of the destruction of missiles and bombs to the areas of rules and procedures, interviews and aerial surveillance. All of that is to Iraq's credit. However, the report also clearly emphasizes that "The results in terms of, disarmament have been very limited so far" (*S/2003/232, annex, para. 73*).

It is clear that better cooperation from the Iraqi authorities would have made it possible to achieve speedier and more substantial progress. As we and others have said previously, the effectiveness and viability of the inspections regime depends upon unconditional, full and active cooperation on the part of the authorities in Baghdad. We believe that view is shared around this table, as well as by the inspectors themselves.

At this stage, in the light of the report and the oral briefings given to us today, Cameroon believes that Iraq has not yet taken the final opportunity afforded to it by the Council on 8 November when it unanimously adopted resolution 1441 (2002).

Cameroon has always favoured the peaceful settlement of disputes. Cameroon is against war — in Iraq or elsewhere — but, as a member of the Security Council, it has the responsibility and the duty to ensure, along with other members, that States fully implement the decisions taken by this body, whether with regard to Iraq or to any other conflict on the Council's agenda. In that vein, Cameroon is convinced that the matter of Iraq should be dealt with calmly and with pragmatism and determination.

We are in favour of inspections. We continue to believe that they can allow us to achieve the objectives set by resolution 1441 (2002), but we do not believe that inspections should go on indefinitely.

We must together seek, in good faith, a credible alternative to war and to endless inspections. Some proposals have been put forward in this regard that are deserving of consideration.

We believe that the major and central problem, at this crucial time, is to induce the Iraqi authorities to cooperate actively, fully and unconditionally if they wish to see the peaceful and rapid disarmament of their country, to which only they hold the key.

As the report before us states, without such cooperation, there can be no verified disarmament.

It seems to us that, rather than continuing to make a show of our divisions, we should work together to overcome our differences and to rebuild our unity and

our cohesion. In that way, we will able — in a single voice, with greater strength and credibility, and with a view to achieving the effectiveness we seek — to enjoin the Iraqi authorities to cooperate actively and fully with the inspectors, as required by resolution 1441 (2002), to which they have fully agreed.

The gravity of the situation and the need for effectiveness require that, at this late hour, we do everything possible, as we did in October 2002, to harmonize viewpoints through mutual concessions. We must absolutely find a solution that is based on consensus. The unity and effectiveness of the Security Council would thereby be preserved, and the United Nations and the international community would thereby be strengthened, as would international peace and security.

I should like to conclude by urging the Iraqi authorities — in the interest of their people, their country and of the region, and in the interest of peace — to make clear, finally and very quickly, their full readiness and their firm commitment to cooperate in the context of resolution 1441 (2002).

I call on all Council members to work together to build a common position that would make it clear, with all the required firmness, to the Iraqi authorities that, if they wish to see the peaceful disarmament of their country, they have no alternative but to abide by the decisions of the international community.

I call on the members of the Council to use all necessary means to induce Iraq finally to take up this last opportunity offered in resolution 1441 (2002).

Let us refuse to be victims of fate.

Disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction is important, even crucial, for international peace and security. On such an important issue — Cameroon has said it before and will repeat it today — the peoples of the United Nations expect the members of the Security Council to work and act together, not at cross-purposes. The peoples of the United Nations do not want to see Council members take parallel paths; indeed, parallel lines never meet. Our peoples wish to see us go forward together.

It is in this spirit, and fully aware of this dual requirement of unity and cohesion, that Cameroon has been participating, and will continue to participate, in the work of the Security Council and in the Council's consultations on the various proposals we have before us, in order finally to make the disarmament of Iraq a reality.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Cameroon for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): May I at the outset, Sir, say to you how very pleased I am to see you presiding over the work of the Council for the month of March, not just because you represent Guinea, a friendly country, but also because you personally have already made an enormous contribution to the work of our Council in the context of other duties.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank also the German delegation, Minister Fischer and Ambassador Pleuger for their very effective leadership during the month of February.

I should like first of all to thank Mr. ElBaradei and Mr. Blix for the briefings they have just given us. The Bulgarian authorities have analysed in depth the report submitted to the Council by Mr. Blix. The update he has just given us is a useful addition and confirms the conclusions that we ourselves had arrived at during our careful reading of this important document.

I should like also to thank Mr. Blix, Mr. ElBaradei and their teams for their professionalism and for their dedication to their work.

The picture painted by Mr. Blix in his report is nuanced. While the Iraqi authorities are cooperating with regard to the procedural aspects of inspections — in particular by ensuring unlimited access to sites placed under the supervision of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) — so-called substantial cooperation is still not satisfactory, and Iraq's attitude leaves something to be desired. Given this lack of substantive cooperation, the report concludes, quite rightly, that thus far the major objective of resolution 1441 (2002) — the disarmament of Iraq — has not yet been achieved.

Mr. Blix has informed the Council that results in the area of disarmament have to date been very modest. Of course, in recent days, as he has just told us, Iraq has made additional efforts. To date, 34 prohibited Al Samoud 2 missiles have been destroyed. Bulgaria welcomes this development. The destruction must

continue at a sustained, or even more rapid, pace. However, more than three months after the adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), no significant breakthrough has been made regarding the quantities of chemical and biological weapons which are considered to be missing, especially anthrax and VX gas.

These valuable but unfortunately partial successes in inspections would not have been possible without the international community's constant pressure on Iraq. The unanimous adoption of resolution 1441 (2002) was the major and most effective form to date of diplomatic pressure. Having said that, let us face the evidence: it is the threat of the use of military force and even the very presence of a significant number of American and British soldiers on the borders of Iraq that make resolution 1441 (2002) truly credible. In spite of this necessary inevitable linking of diplomacy with force, Iraq's cooperation remains insufficient. It is neither immediate nor unconditional nor active, as provided for under operative paragraph 9 of resolution 1441 (2002).

On 5 February 2003, Bulgaria declared that Iraq was still in material breach of resolution 1441 (2002) and of other relevant Security Council resolutions. It is with great regret that I am led today to reiterate that observation.

In spite of the absence of any real change in Iraq's attitude, war is not inevitable. We are convinced that the use of force is only a last resort once all diplomatic means have been exhausted. Bulgaria associates itself with the declaration of the European Council of 17 February in Brussels, which states that "The Iraqi regime alone will be responsible for the consequences if it continues to flout the will of the international community and does not take this last opportunity".

The draft resolution submitted for consideration by the Security Council by the delegations of Spain, the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as the memorandum circulated by France, Germany and Russia (S/2003/214, annex), are not incompatible. Both documents, as in fact the declaration of the European Council of 17 February 2003 states, observe that inspections cannot go on indefinitely. The memorandum emphasizes that pressure on Iraq must be increased. Bulgaria associates itself with that strategy, which it has been advocating since it realized that the Iraqi declaration of 7 December 2002 is not very credible.

Following this state of affairs, my country believes that the draft resolution is an effective means to increase pressure on Iraq to comply with relevant Security Council resolutions. Iraq continues to defy the will of the international community to see it disarmed. Only under pressure does it give the appearance of disarming. Consequently, Bulgaria is prepared to support the draft resolution. The adoption of such a resolution would be a logical continuation of the efforts of the Security Council to make Iraq understand that patience has its limits.

We have taken due note of the amendments just introduced to the Security Council by the delegation of the United Kingdom. We shall study them carefully. At first glance, I must say that they go in the direction desired by my delegation, which is to seek consensus once again in the Security Council.

For Bulgaria, the unity of the Council remains both an objective to be achieved in order to preserve the credibility of the United Nations and multilateralism in general, but also a means to achieve Iraq's disarmament. Nothing can replace diplomacy, particularly multilateral diplomacy, in the days to come — imaginative, innovative and courageous diplomacy. In the days to come dialogue among the members of the Council must be intensified, since dialogue alone can allow for positions which today seem a bit too set, a bit too rigid, to be brought closer.

For Bulgaria, which is an old European nation and a recently re-established democracy, the stakes are large. The unity of the Council would mean both overcoming unproductive divisions within the European Union and strengthening transatlantic ties.

In joining its voice to those of the overwhelming majority of Council members, Bulgaria appeals solemnly to all Council members. Let us make an additional effort for the peaceful disarmament of Iraq. The very credibility of the United Nations and the Security Council are at stake. Let us rise to the moment. Peace will only have a final opportunity through our regained unity.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Bulgaria for his kind words of friendship.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): It is a pleasure to see the distinguished Foreign Minister of fraternal Guinea presiding over the deliberations of this historic and perhaps faithful meeting of the Security Council on Iraq. I would also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Germany, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer and my friend Ambassador Gunter Pleuger for the outstanding presidency of Germany during the previous month.

Iraq is a fraternal Islamic country, a country that should be among the most prosperous and advanced in our region. It is sad to see the suffering of the Iraqi people, suffering imposed on them as a result of two tragic wars against two fraternal neighbours, and the consequent sanctions and penalties imposed on their country. These sanctions have persisted for a dozen years now because of the resistance from the Iraqi leadership to eliminate the weapons of mass destruction they may possess or to provide credible proof that these have been destroyed.

If war is to be avoided and a peaceful solution realized, the Council must impress upon Iraq at this meeting once again that it must comply fully and faithfully with its resolutions prescribing the elimination of its weapons of mass destruction and Iraq must extend, as resolution 1441 (2002) demands, active, immediate and unconditional cooperation in the process of eliminating its weapons of mass destruction. This is in Iraq's own supreme interest. The Iraqi leadership must also take all possible measures to prevent suffering for the Iraqi people that would flow from a conflict.

We are grateful to Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei for their respective reports. Their assessments have a critical bearing on any judgement that the Council would make on whether the objectives of resolution 1441 (2002) and earlier resolutions are being met. In previous reports, we have been informed of mixed results — cooperation on process, but far from satisfactory cooperation on substance. The latest report of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Committee (UNMOVIC), the twelfth quarterly report, notes the presentation by Iraq of new documents, the beginning of private interviews, the enactment of national legislation and the acceptance of aerial surveillance. Overall, the report notes that the results in terms of disarmament have been very limited so far. It asks the natural question, "why a number of the measures, which are being taken, could not have been initiated earlier".

However, since this report came out, the process of destruction of the Al Samoud missiles, as sought by UNMOVIC, has been under way. Mr. Blix has stated that the dismantling of these missiles is "the most spectacular and the most important tangible evidence of real disarmament". Mr. Blix has also outlined 29 clusters of questions pertaining to the remaining tasks to complete the disarmament of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. We must move quickly to address and resolve all these issues. The conclusions presented by the IAEA Director General today indicate that there is no evidence of the revival of Iraq's nuclear programme at present.

It is unfortunate that, within the Council, divergent approaches have emerged to securing the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, with one side advocating urgent enforcement action and the other suggesting an intensified inspections and disarmament process. Pakistan believes that an agreed approach can and must be evolved, even at this stage, through consultations among Council members and with United Nations inspectors. The best assurance of success in securing the disarmament of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction peacefully is the unity of the Security Council.

We look forward, therefore, to the informal consultations this afternoon. We should identify the measures that could be taken by Iraq, by the United Nations inspectors and by the Security Council which could establish beyond doubt that the United Nations inspections process is working and will result in the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction in a relatively short period of time. Agreed ways and means to accomplish key outstanding disarmament tasks can be the basis for such a consensus. Once we establish the ways to credibly achieve the disarmament of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, we can also agree on a relatively short time frame.

This approach, in our view, would be better than propositions that could result in the early use of force. We understand, of course, the legitimate concerns which have been expressed here again today about the presence of hidden weapons of mass destruction assets or capabilities and about the consequence of relieving the pressure which has evoked the cooperation now being offered by Iraq, and the desire to secure the

implementation of Security Council resolutions. However, we believe that there is no imminent threat to international peace and security.

The cost of delay, in our view, will be much less than the cost of war. A credible pause for peace will be worthwhile. As our Secretary-General has said, "war is always a human catastrophe — a course we should only consider when all possibilities for a peaceful settlement have been exhausted".

The Security Council's vocation is peace, not war. War will have grave consequences for the Iraqi people, for peace and stability in our fragile region, for international peace and security and for a world order based on the principles of the United Nations Charter and the rule of law. We must take into account the sentiments of our peoples and the views of other United Nations Member States, the non-aligned countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Finally, the Security Council must uphold the principle of equity and non-discrimination in international relations. We must without doubt hold Iraq up to the standards of international legality established by the resolutions of the Security Council, but we must ask the international community also to adhere to the same standards in addressing other problems and disputes. The Security Council has adopted several resolutions to secure the solution to other festering and dangerous conflicts, such as those relating to Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine.

The resolutions of the Council must also be implemented with vigour and determination. The new architecture for global stability and prosperity at the dawn of the twenty-first century cannot be built upon double standards.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Pakistan for his kind words addressed to me.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Guinea.

I should like to thank Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei for their briefings and to express once again Guinea's confidence in and support for them.

This statement comes at a special time. Humankind today finds itself at the crossroads in a period fraught with dangers and full of uncertainty, which threaten to call into question the basic common values that have always governed relations among States and that are the bedrock on which the United Nations is built. The world in which we live is characterized primarily by many hotbeds of tension, the combined effects of which seriously jeopardize international peace and security.

It is at this particularly critical moment in international life, defined by contradictory trends, that we are holding this public meeting on the thorny question of Iraq. The presence in this Chamber of almost all the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of States members of the Security Council bears witness to the importance of the subject we are debating today.

A few months ago, with a view to finding a final solution to the Iraqi crisis, on which all international attention is now focused, our Council adopted resolution 1441 (2002) after arduous negotiations. It is true that significant progress has been made in the implementation of that resolution since then. My delegation welcomes that progress and expresses the hope that this trend will continue so as to consolidate this first active cooperation by Iraq. These facts must be rapidly confirmed by further and more significant gestures so as definitively to re-establish confidence and bring us closer to our common share objective: the complete and effective disarmament of Iraq.

Since the onset of the crisis, Guinea, which has opted for the peaceful disarmament of Iraq, has remained convinced that, while the opportunity for a political solution still exists, it can be seized only if the Iraqi authorities cooperate sincerely to guarantee an effective inspection regime.

To that end, Baghdad must provide precise responses to important pending issues, in particular by giving convincing proof of the unilateral destruction of certain biological and chemical weapons; by further encouraging scientists and experts to submit to private interviews, inside and outside the country, in accordance with the modalities provided for under resolution 1441 (2002); by providing without delay an updated list of all those scientists involved in armaments programmes; and by expanding the scope of legislation on the production, import and export of weapons of mass destruction.

We can never say this enough: this is in Iraq's own interests. It is especially in the interests of its

people, who have suffered too much under the ongoing sanctions. The international community, which today seems to be in favour of a political solution, will not understand if Iraq should pursue the equivocation of the past.

In the current state of crisis, Guinea, while in favour of continued inspections, believes that they cannot go on indefinitely. In the face of the challenge confronting us all, we remain more convinced than ever that the adoption of a unified approach is the only course that can give our action the necessary authority and legitimacy.

We are among those who believe that if the Security Council manages this crisis effectively, its credibility and influence will be considerably strengthened. For its part, my delegation, during its presidency, will endeavour to seek elements of consensus to attain that objective.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The next speaker is the representative of Iraq, on whom I now call.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are confident that your African wisdom will be the best guarantor of the success of the Council's work under these difficult circumstances. I should also like to thank Germany for its presidency of the Security Council last month and for all its efforts towards the success of the Council's deliberations.

I would like to thank Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei for their efforts and for their briefings. Let me underline our pledge to continue proactive cooperation with them.

Iraq's actions are based on a deep sense of responsibility and on a clear vision of the nature of the very difficult international situation, which is inauspicious not only for Iraq and its people but for the region and the entire world, including the United Nations. The entire world, with the exception of a few States, wishes to see the United Nations continue to fulfil the tasks entrusted to it in the area of international peace and security.

It seems that a possible war of aggression against Iraq has become imminent, regardless of any decision by the Security Council and despite the fact that official and public international opinion strongly rejects aggression and war and demands a peaceful solution. The French, German, Russian and Chinese position makes it clear that there is no need for a second resolution to be adopted by the Security Council. It demands that the work of the inspectors continue and that they be given enough time to complete their tasks by peaceful means.

The position of the Arab countries is also clear, particularly the position taken at the latest Arab Summit, which unanimously rejected an attack on Iraq as a threat to Arab national security. The Summit called for a peaceful resolution of the Iraqi crisis within the framework of international legitimacy. The Summit affirmed the Security Council's responsibility to preserve the independence, security and territorial integrity of Iraq. The Summit also declared that it is time to lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq.

The latest summit of the 116-member Non-Aligned Movement, held in Kuala Lumpur, condemned the use or threat of military action, considering it to be aggression and a flagrant violation of the principle of non-interference.

The heads of State and Government and other representatives of 57 Islamic countries, who recently met at the Doha Summit, also declared their absolute rejection of any aggression against Iraq, considering it to be a threat to the security of all Islamic States.

Here, I would like to recall the position of the African Union, which has clearly and categorically rejected war and called for a peaceful solution. I should like also to express my appreciation for the efforts being made by churches throughout the world in stressing the importance of peace, in particular the efforts being made by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in advocating peace and denouncing war, which he considers to be lacking any moral basis or legitimacy.

On behalf of the people of Iraq, I salute all peoples of the world, in particular the peoples of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Spain, who took to the streets by the millions to express their devotion to peace and their rejection of war.

The United States Administration, together with that of the United Kingdom, continues to fabricate "facts" and "evidence" suggesting Iraq's possession of

weapons of mass destruction. However, they have not managed to convince the international community. The inspectors have proven that there are no such weapons and that such allegations are false. Secretary of State Powell spoke of the lack of a strategic political decision by Iraq to demonstrate its commitment to complying with the resolutions of international legitimacy and to ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction.

Let me affirm that in 1991 Iraq did indeed take the strategic decision to rid itself of weapons of mass destruction. Accordingly, the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) worked in Iraq for eight years. Iraq handed over many of those weapons to UNSCOM for destruction in the period from 1991 to 1994. UNSCOM did in fact undertake the destruction of those weapons. That was in addition to the weapons unilaterally destroyed by Iraq in the summer of 1991, which included proscribed biological material. Those are the basic facts of the matter. Since then, nothing that contradicts those facts has been unearthed.

All weapons that have been proscribed fall into one of two categories: they have been either declared or unilaterally destroyed by Iraq. All the declarations that Iraq has been repeatedly asked to present concerned the details and verification of that unilateral destruction and nothing — nothing — else. It is for the accusers to prove otherwise, if they possess any evidence.

With respect to what Secretary of State Powell stated about Iraq's VX programme, the fact is that Iraq had no VX weapons to declare. No VX agent remained for Iraq to declare. Iraq has never produced stable VX and has never weaponized VX. No one has any evidence to prove the contrary. Mr. Powell should not jump to hasty conclusions as he has done in the past on the issue of the aluminium tubes and with his claims of uranium imports. Today the Council heard exactly the opposite directly from Mr. ElBaradei.

With respect to the statements on Iraq's cooperation that I heard this morning from many members of the Council, allow me to refer to the statement by Mr. Blix, not today but two days ago in a press conference. At that press conference, Mr. Blix stated that Iraq is cooperating proactively — I stress that he used the word "proactively". He stated that real disarmament is taking place on the ground. He stated that the efforts being undertaken by Iraq and the inspectors represent steps towards the actual verification of Iraq's unilateral destruction of its previous proscribed programmes.

When asked whether Iraq represents a threat now, he replied that all agree that Iraq possesses very limited military capacities in comparison with 1991, and that Iraq is being very closely monitored by the inspectors.

On the issue of interviews, Mr. Blix stated that his experts have made it clear that those interviews are yielding important and beneficial results in terms of data. In this regard, he pointed out the importance of Iraq's submitting the names of those who had participated in the destruction of proscribed programmes, which would surely facilitate the verification of such destruction. He added that he did not agree with those who say that resolution 1441 (2002) is a disarmament resolution and not an inspection resolution.

The statements of the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as those of some other speakers today, show that there is a state of confusion. Officials in the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as those standing at their side, are unable to provide any evidence proving the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Furthermore, they have been unable to conceal their own private agenda in the region and the rest of the world.

This all started with the issue of Iraq's possession and development of weapons of mass destruction. Then they demanded that Iraq accept the return of inspectors. They then moved on to the issue of proactive cooperation with the inspectors, followed by demands for the submission of evidence proving that Iraq was free from weapons of mass destruction. At the most recent meeting, they concentrated on the need to destroy Al Samoud 2 missiles. The discussion then moved on to the claim that Iraq is destroying such missiles on the one hand and manufacturing new ones on the other. Talk then began about an alleged link with terrorism and about regime change. Finally, here we are hearing that Iraq is a threat to the national security of the United States — that is the claim made by President Bush — although earlier we had heard that Iraq was a threat to its neighbours.

This is an attempt to confuse the issue. It is an attempt to mask the real agenda of the United States of America and the United Kingdom with regard to Iraq. It is a very simple agenda. The objective is the

complete takeover of Iraq's oil and the political and economic domination of the entire Arab region. It is the implementation of what is being called a new Sikes-Pico plan for the Middle East — the redrawing of the region once more.

When Iraq accepted Security Council resolutions it was hoping for justice from the Council, and it continues to do so. The introduction of the new draft resolution and the most recent amendment do not relate to disarmament. The aim is to drag the Security Council into taking actions that will have detrimental consequences, not only for Iraq, but for the very credibility of this international Organization.

I should like at this point to express Iraq's gratitude to all those who oppose the draft resolution. Let me repeat to them that Iraq will not waver in its continuing proactive and rapid cooperation with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

We call upon the Security Council to shoulder its historical responsibility, especially today, by thwarting aggression against Iraq and preventing a new crime from being committed in its name — a crime whose impact would far surpass that of any crime of the past century.

In conclusion, let me add that war against Iraq will wreak destruction, but it will not unearth any weapons of mass destruction, for one very simple reason: there are no such weapons, except in the imagination of some. All those who assist in the commission of such a war, without a direct interest in it, will be sorry indeed.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Iraq for the kind words he addressed to me. There are no further speakers on my list.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I invite Council members to continue our discussion in informal consultations at 5 p.m.

The meeting rose at 2.20 p.m.